



THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR



CAPT. H.M. HOZIER.



4° Eur. 503^s (3



Engraved by G. J. Stodart. from a Photograph.

H O B A R T P A S H A .



Portrait of a Pasha, from a Photograph.

ART PASHA.

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C
T H E

RUSO-TURKISH WAR:

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF THE

RISE AND DECLINE OF THE OTTOMAN POWER,

AND THE

History of the Eastern Question.

EDITED BY

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S U L E I M A N P A S H A .



AHMED MUKHTAR PASHA

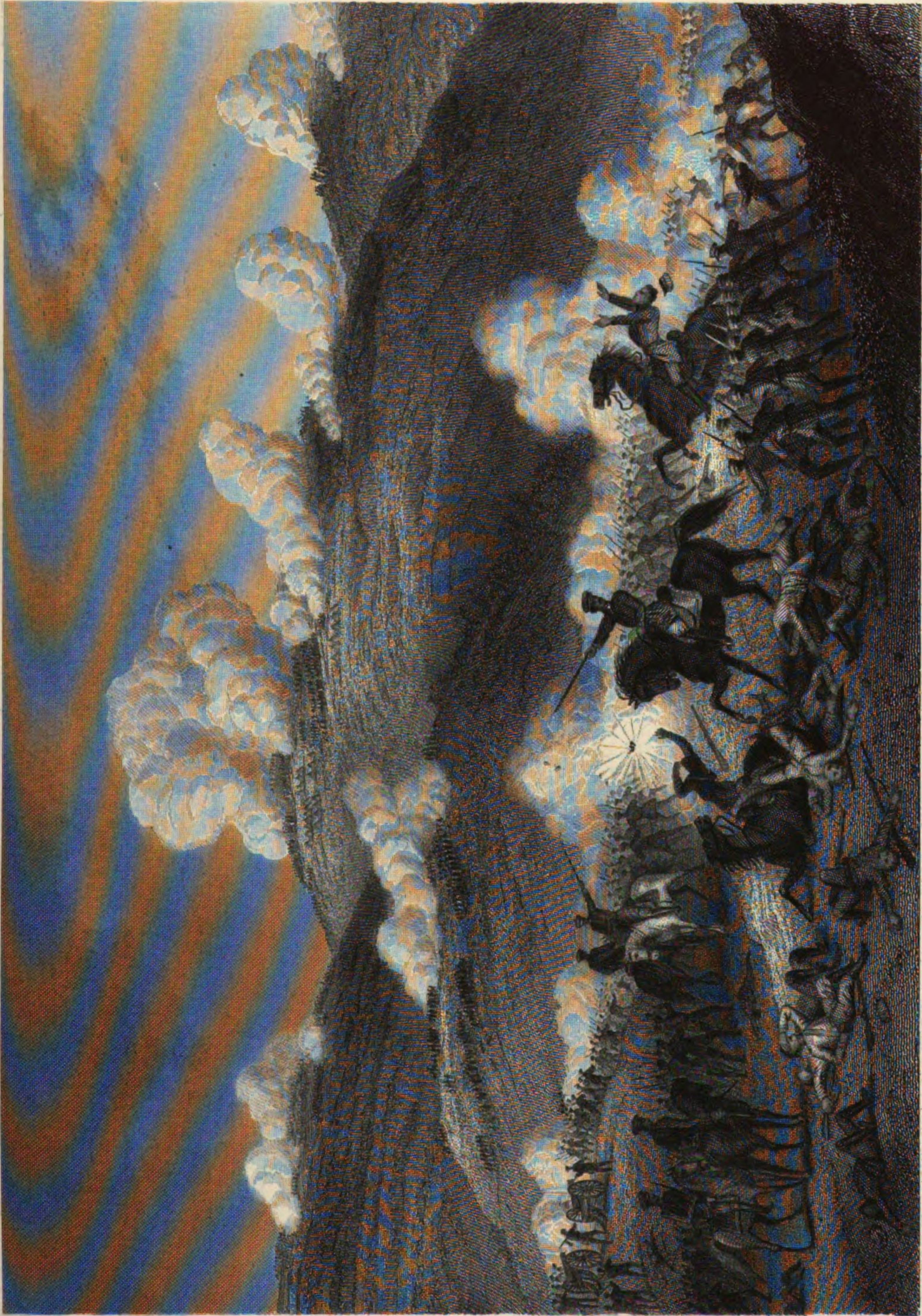


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AHMED MUKHTAR PASHA.



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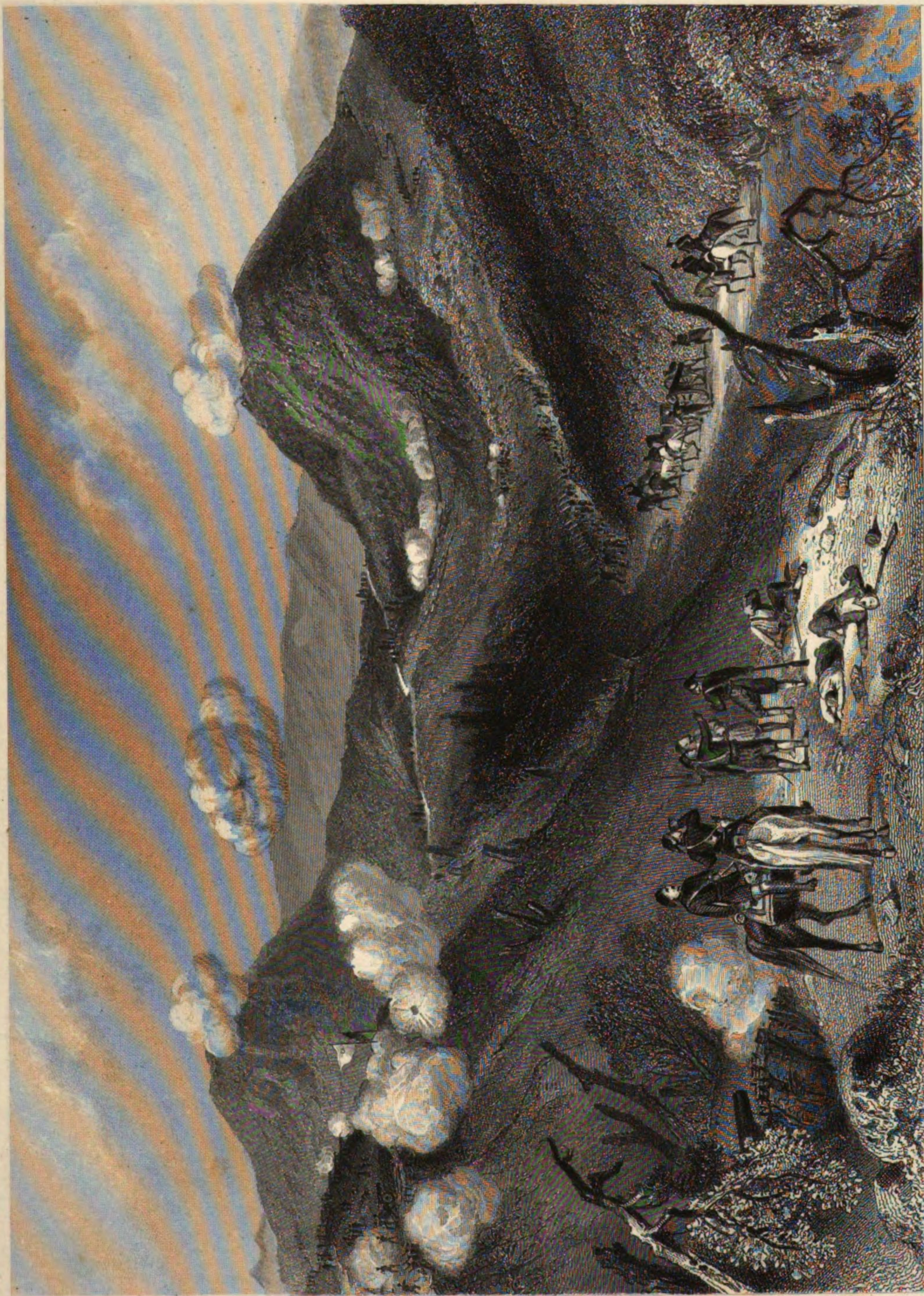
BATTLE OF PLEVNA,

30TH JULY 1877

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TURKISH ATTACK ON THE SWISS MAIL.



E. P. Brandard.

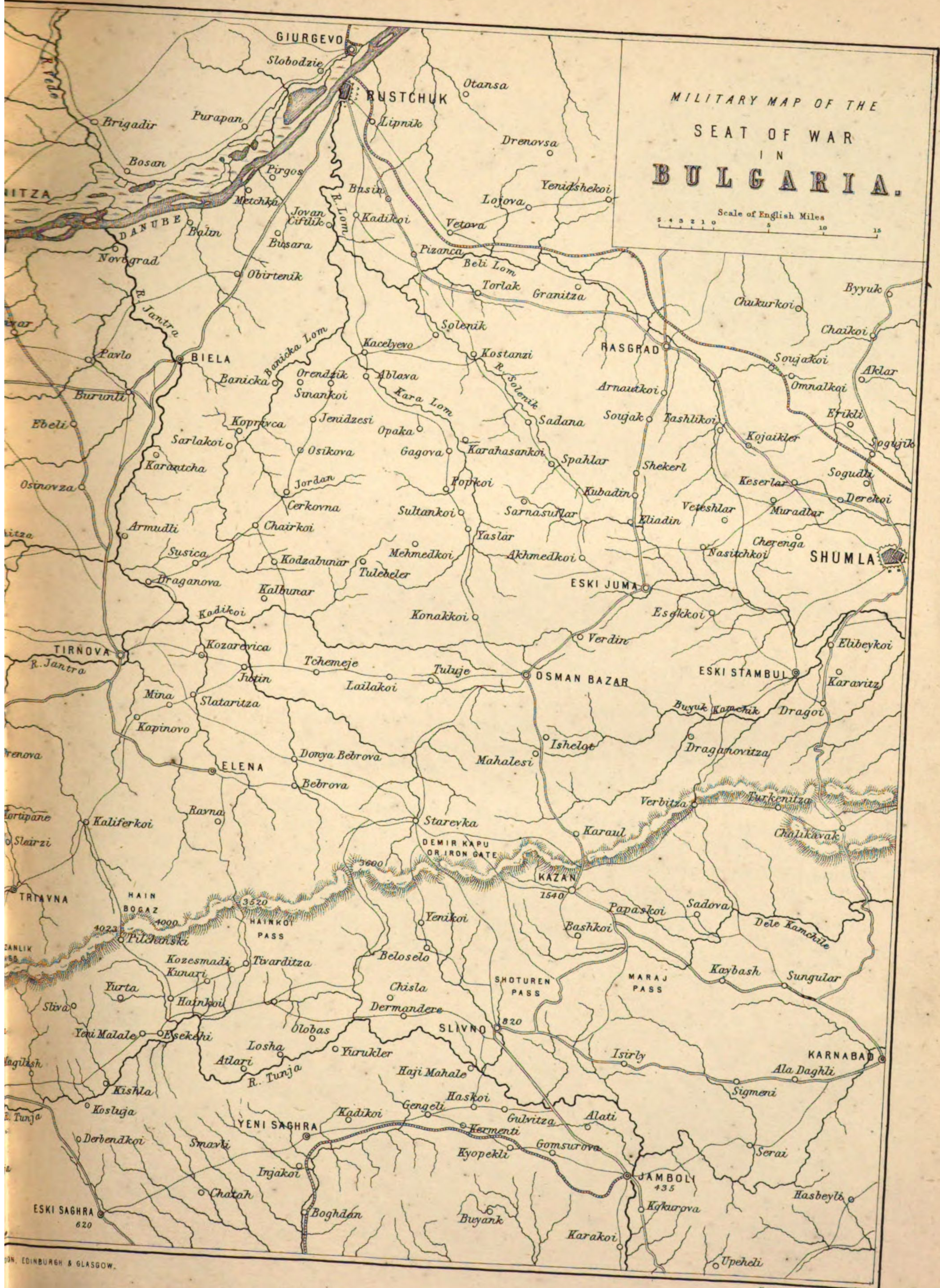
J. Ramage.

TURKISH ATTACK ON THE SHIPKA PASS.



MILITARY MAP OF THE
SEAT OF WAR
IN
BULGARIA.

Scale of English Miles
5 4 3 2 1 0 5 10 15



fatigue of one continual march, whilst the line remained unbroken. The presence of the Roumanians greatly facilitated these operations. On the first arrival of the Russians the Roumanians began a retrograde movement from the Danube towards the interior; but they were sent back to their positions, and did good service by holding them until the Russian troops gradually came down to relieve them, when they marched westward to join the rest of the Roumanian army, which had assembled in Little Wallachia.

From the first it was evident that the Russians had determined to proceed systematically, so as to leave as little as possible to chance. Steadily, really quickly, although seemingly slowly, were the masses gathered for the invasion. Every day brought its regiment, its brigade, its battery, up into the position chosen for the awaiting of the order to fall in in stern earnest. Gradually the huge wave gathered, its mass slowly drifting rather than moving forward. But where the weight of it would fall in thunder remained concealed with a care and skill that evoked the sincerest admiration. Not a word as to the intentions of the Russian commanders was suffered to ooze out. The army was warned that the disclosure to any individual of any movements or dispositions, or of any orders given, would be punished by death. The correspondents of the press were reduced to a system, and were warned that the infringement of positive rules would entail expulsion or worse. So close was the cordon round the part of the river where the Russian preparations were made, that the very inhabitants of the district were not allowed to live in their own homes, albeit Roumania was a friendly country.

In the present campaign there was no trace of that marching to and fro, and that sort of feeling their way, so conspicuous even in that of 1854, and much more so in the previous one, which looked very much as if they had come without anything deserving the name of a plan of campaign. It was evident they had studied to some advantage the systematic mode of warfare pursued by the Germans in 1870. Their whole march to the Danube gave evidence of this; such, for instance, as their sending a wing by the shortest road to occupy the most important and exposed centres of communication between the Sereth and the Pruth, and their wheeling on the pivot formed by their left wing, with their centre and right wing coming

down through Moldavia by rail and road. The descent to Oltenitza and Giurgevo threw a very clear and favourable light on their proceedings. Although at the former point an artillery fire between the Turkish batteries at Turtukai and those erected by the Roumanians at Oltenitza had begun for some time, the Russian commander was in no hurry to get to the Danube; but as the troops destined for that point and for Giurgevo came up, they took up position half-way between Bucharest and the Danube, there to wait until the military trains of the corps which was to operate on that line arrived; and it was only then that the order for advancing in the direction of Giurgevo to the Danube was first given, and for the Russian troops to occupy the positions hitherto held for them by the Roumanians.

Such a systematic advance, over so wide an extent of country, necessarily occupied considerable time; but everything considered, and especially taking into account the very unfavourable weather at first, and the fact of there being only one railway, with a single line, the campaign advanced as rapidly as could have been expected. It was of course necessary to bring all the Russian reserve stores near the river, in order to prevent any delay after the troops had once crossed.

It is true the actual crossing of the Danube was not effected anything like so rapidly as in 1828, when the Russian army crossed the Pruth on the 7th of May, a fortnight later than their advance in 1877. The Turks held the fortress of Brahilov, on the northern side of the Danube, but this interfered but little with the onward movement of the Russian force. As upon the present occasion, a portion of the Russian army marched to Bucharest, and while one division went on to Kalafat, the main body marched to Giurgevo. The 3rd Corps marched to Satanow, a few miles below Galatz, and prepared to cross into the Dobrudscha. On June 9 this Corps effected a passage in boats, 1500 being ferried across before the Turks at the fortress of Isakchi, four miles distant, perceived what was going on. Isakchi, a weakly-fortified place, surrendered at once. On the previous day, the Turkish flotilla opposite Brahilov was defeated by a Russian squadron; and on the 16th Brahilov, after five weeks' gallant defence, capitulated. The strong fortress of Matchin surrendered at the first summons, the governor having been bought by the Russians.

The columns at Widdin and Giurgevo failed to effect a crossing; and as the Dobrudscha was now open to them by the passage of the 3rd Corps and the surrender of Matchin, the division at Giurgevo retraced their steps through Bucharest to Hirsova, where they crossed and joined the 3rd Corps. Although this Corps had crossed on the 9th, and experienced no opposition, it took no less than fourteen days to march to Karasu, a distance of 75 miles, owing to the natural difficulties of the road. After a skirmish outside Basardjik, in which the Turkish horse drove in the Russian vanguard with great slaughter, the 3rd Corps rested at Basardjik until, on July 11, it was joined by a portion of the 7th Corps, the remainder—10,000 men—being detained to watch Silistria. These were freed by the arrival of the 6th Corps, after their long detour from Giurgevo, and the whole of the 3rd and the 7th Corps assembled at Basardjik on the 21st of July.

The Russian army at the European seat of war originally consisted of the following nine corps:—

Fourth Corps, Minsk (Lieutenant-general Zotoff). 16th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 61st and 62nd Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 63rd and 64th Regiments. 30th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 117th and 118th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 119th and 120th Regiments. 4th Cavalry Division—1st Brigade, 4th Hussars and 4th Lancers; 2nd Brigade, 4th Dragoons and 4th Don Cossacks.

Seventh Corps (Lieutenant-general Ganetsky). 15th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 57th and 58th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 59th and 60th Regiments. 36th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 141st and 142nd Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 143rd and 144th Regiments. 7th Cavalry Division—1st Brigade, 7th Dragoons and 7th Lancers; 2nd Brigade, 7th Hussars and 7th Don Cossacks.

Eighth Corps (Lieutenant-general Radetski). 9th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 33rd and 34th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 35th and 36th Regiments. 14th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 53rd and 54th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 55th and 56th Regiments. 8th Cavalry Division—1st Brigade, 8th Dragoons and 8th Lancers; 2nd Brigade, 8th Hussars and 8th Don Cossacks.

Ninth Corps (Lieutenant-general Baron Krudener). 5th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 17th and 18th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 19th and 20th Regiments. 31st Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 121st and 122nd Regiments; 2nd Bri-

gade, 123rd and 124th Regiments. 9th Cavalry Division—1st Brigade, 9th Dragoons and 9th Lancers; 2nd Brigade, 9th Hussars and 9th Don Cossacks.

Tenth Corps (Lieutenant-general Prince Woronzoff). 13th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 49th and 50th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 51st and 52nd Regiments. 34th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 133rd and 134th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 155th and 156th Regiments. 10th Cavalry Division—1st Brigade, 10th Dragoons and 10th Lancers; 2nd Brigade, 10th Hussars and 10th Don Cossacks.

Eleventh Corps (Lieutenant-general Prince Schachowskoi.) 11th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 41st and 42nd Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 43rd and 44th Regiments. 32nd Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 125th and 126th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 127th and 128th Regiments. 11th Cavalry Division—1st Brigade, 11th Dragoons and 11th Lancers; 2nd Brigade, 11th Hussars and 11th Don Cossacks.

Twelfth Corps (Lieutenant-general Vannofsky). 12th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 45th and 46th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 47th and 48th Regiments. 33rd Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 129th and 130th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 131st and 132nd Regiments. 12th Cavalry Division—1st Brigade, 12th Dragoons and 12th Lancers; 2nd Brigade, 12th Hussars and 12th Don Cossacks.

Thirteenth Corps (General Hahn). 1st Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 1st and 2nd Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 3rd and 4th Regiments. 35th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 137th and 138th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 139th and 140th Regiments. 13th Cavalry Division—1st Brigade, 13th Hussars and 13th Lancers; 2nd Brigade, 13th Dragoons and 13th Don Cossacks.

Fourteenth Corps (Lieutenant-general Zimmermann). 17th Infantry Division—1st Brigade, 65th and 66th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 67th and 68th Regiments. 18th Infantry Division (Lieutenant-general Karzoff)—1st Brigade, 69th and 70th Regiments; 2nd Brigade, 71st and 72nd Regiments.

The Commander-in-chief of the army was his Imperial Highness the Grand-duke Nicholas Nicholaivitch, brother of the Emperor, and Inspector-general of the Cavalry and Engineers. In age about forty-six, tall of stature, and of robust build, not unlike the Emperor, the Grand-duke looked a thorough soldier. With the army

he was extremely popular, and he never missed an opportunity of encouraging a deserving man by personal notice. Before the war he founded the Staff College, and encouraged military science by offering a large prize to the world for the best essay on the History of Cavalry, which was awarded to a Canadian officer.

The chief of the staff, General Nepokoitschitzky, was of Polish family, and was nearly seventy years of age. He had seen more service than most of the Russian leaders, and his experience of staff duty in particular had been long and continuous. He joined the army as an infantry officer, and first saw active service in the Caucasus, where his merit was so conspicuous that he speedily received a staff appointment. He held an important and responsible office on the general staff of the army which Russia sent to co-operate with Austria in quelling the Hungarian insurrection of 1849. In the war of 1854 and 1855 he was chief of the staff to one of the corps composing the army with which Gortschakoff occupied the Principalities, and took part under Paskievitch in the memorable siege of Silistria. From 1855 to 1877 the General saw no active service, but was continually in military employment of one sort or another. Although chief of the staff of the Army of the South, for which position he was chosen because of his acquaintance with the region of the Danubian Valley, derived from his experience in the campaign of 1854, he was not the head of the superior general staff of Russia. That high office is filled by Count Heidan. Before his appointment to the office he held in the present war, General Nepokoitschitzky was at the head of the Commission for the re-organization of the army on the new system which replaced the old Russian system, and the operation of which, although its institution was so recent that its value could not be fully realised, undoubtedly did much to improve the Russian army. His subordinate was General Levitsky.

The personal staff was numerous even for a Grand-duke. Many more than 100 officers filled this or that function about the "Glavni Stab." One thing was very noticeable concerning them. Nearly all wore on the right breast the silver badge, an eagle surrounded with a wreath, denoting that they had been through the course at the Staff College at St. Petersburg, which bears the name of the Commander-in-chief.

As regards the previous services of the commanders of the army corps, Lieutenant-general Ganetsky, commanding the 7th Corps, had a regiment in the siege of Kars in 1855, when the defence was so valiantly conducted by General Fenwick Williams, Colonel Teesdale, and Dr. Humphry Sandwith. Lieutenant-general Prince Woronzoff, 10th Corps—who is almost as much of an Englishman as a Russian—was wounded in the defence of Sebastopol. Lieutenant-general Radetski, 8th Corps, had seen long and hard service in the Caucasus; and the same was true of Lieutenant-general Prince Schachowskoi, 11th Corps. Lieutenant-general Krudener, 9th Corps, had seen no war service. Lieutenant-general Vannofsky, 12th Corps, served in 1854 on the Danube, so that the theatre of the present campaign was familiar to him. Lieutenant-general Hahn, 13th Corps, commanded a regiment in Sebastopol during the great siege. Lieutenant-general Zimmermann, 14th Corps, acted as aide to the chief of the staff of the army of Sebastopol in the same eventful period, and afterwards saw long service in the Caucasus. Lieutenant-general Zotoff, commanding the 4th Corps, had also been long in the Caucasus.

The Russian army has not hitherto been organized in peace with higher units than the division, and only shortly before the war was the army corps recognized. This, as will be seen, consists of two divisions of infantry, with a cavalry division. As a rule, the infantry division consists of two brigades, and the brigade of two regiments. Each regiment has three battalions, so that there are six battalions to a brigade, twelve to a division, and twenty-four to an army corps. The fifth companies of battalions are tirailleurs, and the three tirailleur companies in a regiment may thus form what is virtually another battalion, and the tirailleur battalions may form a brigade if required. To each division of infantry is attached a brigade of field artillery, bearing a number corresponding to the division to which it belongs, and consisting of three 9-pounder and three 4-pounder batteries, each battery having eight guns. The total strength, including artillery and hospital train, on paper, of a division in which the regiments have three battalions is 15,924 men, of whom 11,400 are infantry combatants in front line; and of a division in which the regiments have four battalions, 20,348 men, of whom 15,360 again are infantry combatants in front line. A cavalry division

consists of two brigades—the first formed by a regiment of dragoons and a regiment of lancers; the second, by a regiment of hussars and a regiment of Cossacks, and also of two horse artillery batteries. Including the batteries, a cavalry division numbers 4079 men, placing in the field 2499 sabres and twelve guns. A brigade of rifles comprises 3816 men, placing in the field 3040 bayonets. A Russian peculiarity is the fact that the number shown on the shoulder strap is that of the division to which they belong. The number of their regiments is on their caps, and the number of the battalion within the brigade is known by the hue of the collar. Thus the Russian organization is now almost as much according to the brigade as the regiment.

It will be seen that the average number of fighting men in an army corps should, according to the official organization, amount to about 35,000, including the cavalry division. Inclusive of non-combatants, the strength of the corps should not be far short of 38,000. If 32,000 fighting men per corps are taken as efficient, including officers, the nine corps we have described would amount to 288,000 men.

Several weaknesses and wants were ascribed to the Russian army, such as lack of officers, especially medical. There was doubtless a dearth of trained combatant officers, and the want was severely felt when mobilization was ordered. Even at the commencement of hostilities the cadres were not so complete as they ought to have been, so far as infantry regiments were concerned. But a great deal had been done to remedy the defect in the interval which elapsed between the mobilization and the beginning of the war. As to medical officers, they were not furnished extravagantly to the army, and by no means in the proportion attained by the Red Cross Society. Yet the care of the sick was not neglected. Behind the army there were fifty-four temporary hospitals, with over 600 beds in each. To each hospital were attached ten surgeons, besides a surgeon-in-chief. Of field hospitals there was one to each division, with three surgeons in addition to the regimental surgeons. These field hospitals first took charge of the sufferer, carrying him from the ground where he had fought and fallen, on a stretcher or in an ambulance. His wounds were dressed, and he was then sent to the temporary hospital in the

rear to be cared for, and cured if cure could be found for him. As the army moved forward the temporary hospitals were re-established nearer to it, leaving behind cases whose recovery was not swift enough for the march of events. As the field hospitals were formed the regimental surgeons were attached to them, thus strengthening their hands and avoiding any exaggeration of *esprit de corps*. The Red Cross Society was more luxurious in its arrangements, and happy was the man who fell into its hands. Whereas in the temporary hospitals there was one surgeon to sixty-three patients on an average, and fifty-four hospitals to be managed, the Red Cross at eleven points sheltered and cared for only a total of 154 patients. At each of the eleven stations there were fourteen beds, and for help to the fourteen patients no less than one surgeon, two medical students, and a dresser, besides sisters of charity, and an inspector to manage the provision department, finances, and so on.

Writing some days after the first battle of Plevna, Mr. Archibald Forbes, the able correspondent of the *Daily News*, said—"I have no great faith in the operating skill of the Russian surgeons. I remember that in Servia, when a difficult case occurred, there was always anxiety to have the services of the professional representatives of the British Society of the Order of St. John. But in care for their wounded the Russians surpass any nation of whose war-making I have had any experience. A great proportion, by far indeed the larger proportion, of the service is voluntary, and tendered with an untiring devotion and free-handed liberality which excite the highest admiration and respect. Ladies of rank forswear comfort and the pleasures of society to come with the army and minister to the wounded. There is no *arrière-pensée* in their devotion to this duty. They do not write letters to the Russian papers detailing their experiences, exalting themselves by inferential self-praise, and attitudinizing before the world as paragons of self-abnegation. If you want to know of them and their work you must seek for them and it. They dress with the most studied plainness, and fare very hard, without a thought of self. They tend Turkish and Russian wounded with equal care, and are zealots in their duties day and night."

The experience which the Russians had of the Turkish needle-gun during the first few days of

the campaign caused reinforcements to be despatched to Roumania, and the three corps which were to have acted as reserves were added to the operating force, fresh corps being mobilized in their stead. Early in June orders were issued by the Russian Government to accelerate as much as possible a levy of 218,000 men, which had just been determined on, although 180,000 had been levied only in the previous December.

The result of these measures was that, immediately prior to the crossing of the Danube, the Russians should have had in the front line, between Kalarash and the Hungarian frontier, 232,000 men for the first line of attack. In the second line—Slobodzie, Bucharest, Slatina, Krajova—there were 78,000, and at Ploiesti and Pitesti a reserve of some 20,000 each—40,000 together. These were combatants—a total, therefore, of 350,000, for we have not included whatever troops there were beyond Kalarash, at Galatz, Brahilov, Reni, &c., nor the reserve camps and barracks at Tartar Bunar and Bolgrad. But these figures are probably higher than the force which actually took the field. The heavy guns were supplied with 700 rounds of shot each.

At the commencement of the war the Russians sent forward as many field guns as they could to important points, and afterwards supplied their places with heavier ordnance. The field guns were the 9-pounder and 4-pounder bronze guns, which throw shells of a little more than double the nominal weight. They are breech-loaders, and have a range and accuracy rather less than those of the present English pattern. The naval superiority of Turkey on the Black Sea told very heavily against Russia in such matters as the transport of ordnance. Every gun placed on the Danube, every ounce of ammunition intended for the bombardment of fortresses, whether riverain or inland, had to be brought with immense toil from the arsenals of Russia over many hundred miles of railroad already overworked, and carriages of priceless value for other purposes were taken up in carrying these heavy pieces, with their powder and shells.

Immediately on the outbreak of the war the Roumanian Government issued a proclamation advising persons residing along the Danube to remove into the interior, with all their families and movable property; and in consequence of this manifesto the peasants hastened into the interior, leaving their homes and growing crops.

At Giurgevo, the Roumanian village opposite to Rustchuk, the scene at the railway was very strange. All the country people had gathered there with their household furniture. The station and the space round it was piled with beds, and tables, and chests of drawers, and nondescript articles which these poor people valued. They themselves crushed and surged amongst and upon the heap, helplessly waiting for somebody to relieve them. Such a sight was not beheld even in the Franco-German war, for Giurgevo was the only station by which they could escape. The order of the Government seemed somewhat unnecessary, for the Turks, who made no attempt to destroy the bridge at Galatz, only a few miles from their outposts, were not likely to cross the Danube higher up.

The first exchange of iron compliments between the belligerents took place at Brahilov on Thursday, 3rd May. The Russians opened fire with two field pieces, and after five or six shots had been fired, the Turks replied from five monitors with much heavier guns, aiming not only at the batteries but at the town also, possibly mistaking the Russian consulate for the head-quarters of the invader, in consequence of the large flag which waved from the roof. This was subsequently taken down, and the firing in that direction ceased; and after a short time the Turkish monitors retired behind an island out of sight of the Russian artillerymen. The monitors had been assisted by musketry fire from the village of Getschit, on the right bank of the Danube. Very little damage was done by the missiles thrown into the town by the Turkish vessels. On the following Sunday, when the Grand-duke Nicholas came by rail from Galatz, the Turks, apparently aware of his visit, began shelling the railway station just as the train arrived. Fifteen shots were fired, the shells being eighteen inches long and eight or nine in diameter. One man and one woman were killed, and a horse was wounded, but the train in which the Commander-in-chief travelled was not touched.

On the same day (Sunday, May 6) the Turks regularly attacked the town of Beket, several raids having previously been made on the place during the previous few days by the Bashi-bazouks. Beket is a small port on the Danube, which receives supplies for Crascova. The bombardment lasted some hours, and several houses were burned,

as well as a number of grain-ships, some of them with the British flag flying, lying in the port and in the river. Neither Beket nor Oltenitza, which was shelled on the same day, were garrisoned. Such senseless depredations could have no possible effect on the Russian movements; but they produced the natural result of exasperating the Roumanian people at the very time when the Conservative Peace Party were endeavouring to prevent the Principality drifting into open war against the Porte. Orders were issued to the Roumanian troops to fire upon any Turkish marauding bands crossing the Danube, and the Roumanian General Cherchez, commanding at Kalafat, declared that he would bombard Widdin if any more shots were fired at unfortified towns on the Roumanian shore, from the Turkish batteries or gunboats. The Turkish Government hastened to reply to the remonstrances addressed to it by the British ambassador, with respect to the destruction of British property, and promised full indemnity to the persons aggrieved. It also forwarded stringent orders to the Vali of the Danube vilayet, ordering absolute respect to be paid in future by all Turks to the British flag and property.

On the same day another engagement took place at Isakchi, where a Turkish monitor engaged a Russian shore battery, which had been erected at the monastery of Theraponte, to the south of the village of Satanow, founded by the Russians in commemoration of their passage of the Danube there in 1828. The village lies at some distance from the river on a more elevated point, and from it there runs down to the river, between the lakes of Kugur and Kartal, a narrow strip of land, on which the monastery of Theraponte was built. The result of the encounter was that the monastery was destroyed, and some adjoining buildings set on fire. The thirteenth Russian horse artillery, which replied to the Turkish vessel, had a gun dismounted, lost one man killed, two severely wounded, and three horses.

Early on May 8 the Russian siege battery, which had been constructed and armed at Brailov, opened a heavy fire on two Turkish monitors, and on the body of the Turkish infantry at Getschit, which had more than once harassed them by their fire. Some of the shots took effect at 1500 yards' range, and the monitors were compelled to withdraw after firing several shells into the Russian batteries. The same Russian batteries also suc-

ceeded in preventing the Turkish monitors from issuing from the Old Danube. As soon as the batteries were complete the monitors took refuge near Getschit, and made several vain efforts to escape from their shelter into the main stream; each time they were met by so heavy a concentrated fire that they were obliged to return to their moorings.

The country in the upper part of the Dobrudscha was already almost deserted. All the Mahometans had left for the south, and many Christians had been taken up by stray steamers which ventured near the shore at night.

On the same day (May 8) the Roumanian army, which until then had been regarded as neutral, and as a tacit, if not an unwilling, spectator of the occupation of its country by the Russian forces, assumed the rôle of an active belligerent without an express declaration of war, or avowed active alliance with Russia. This took place at Kalafat, opposite the Turkish fortress at Widdin. The artillery conflict there was commenced by the Turks. The practice was good on both sides, and even the Turks admitted that the Roumanian batteries were well served. The first day's bombardment resulted in the death of a woman in Widdin, and the wounding of half a dozen other citizens. In Kalafat no material injury was done.

The works at Kalafat, from which this artillery combat was carried on, are situated upon a hill about 2700 yards from Widdin, on the opposite, or left, bank of the Danube. The ground upon which they stand is higher than, and commands, that upon which the Turkish fortress is built. Towards the river Widdin itself is an open town, its principal stores facing the water. The ends of its horse-shoe shaped fortification rest on the river; and at each end is a heavy battery, whose guns cover the river face, and forbid a landing. The fortifications of Widdin on the land side consist of two concentric lines of works. The outer one, which incloses the whole town, consists of a simple parapet of earth, having a thickness of twelve feet, and ditches nine feet deep. This parapet is flanked by eleven redoubts, placed from 500 to 600 yards apart, armed with six guns each. The two extreme redoubts, known as Fort Jeldis and Fort Adjab, which rest upon the Danube, are stronger than the others, and have revetted escarps. The inner enceinte is of a more formidable trace, consisting of seven

bastioned fronts, with revetted escarps and counterscarps. Between this inner and the outer line there is a belt of considerable width, which is only partially built over, and which has frequently, in the absence of an outer girdle of detached forts, served the Turkish armies as an intrenched camp. Early in the present war this outer enceinte was much improved. It being impossible to construct a regular covered way, owing to the absence of a glacis, which again could not be thrown up by reason of the low command of the parapet, a *chemin-des-rondes* was cut in the counterscarp to afford additional security against surprise. The powder magazines were rendered bomb-proof by heaping up earth upon them, and the *terre-plein* of both enceintes was protected as much as possible against enfilade fire by the construction of traverses.

The long-range artillery duel between Kalafat and Widdin was continued on May 9; and on the 10th an artillery engagement, which lasted for five hours, took place between some Roumanian batteries, which had been improvised at Oltenitza since the previous Sunday, and two Turkish monitors, supported by a battery at Turtukai. This town and one monitor were much injured. Towards evening the Turks ceased the cannonade, and during the night withdrew the battery. In all, seventy-eight projectiles fell into Turtukai, two of which crashed through the roof of the Greek church, smashed the altar, and tore up the flooring. The outside of this building was slightly damaged by seven shells. Five fell into the Konak and the telegraph offices, one lighted in a mosque, and fifteen private houses were also struck. All the missiles produced breaches of about half a mètre in diameter, and on exploding did much mischief, though no building was completely destroyed or set on fire. Many shells fell into the open streets, and did much damage by the exploded fragments. Of the civil population, twenty-seven were wounded, while one woman and a soldier were killed.

Oltenitza lies on the flat Danubian river side, but about a mile and a half from its bank. As one approaches it there is seen rising beyond it the beautiful swelling slopes of the Turkish side, and the town of Turtukai, half buried in foliage. There is little natural beauty about Oltenitza, and art has not done much to help nature. There are four or five wide, badly-paved, rectangular streets, lined by shabby houses, and in the environs there

are a few good houses. From the end of the town there crosses the flat meadows a fine straight *chaussée*, terminating at a quay on the Danube, which is here not more than 900 yards wide. On the other side the bank rises to a considerable height, and this ridge dominates in the most commanding manner the whole of the low-lying tract on the Roumanian shore. Turtukai is not exactly opposite Oltenitza, but about a mile and a half higher up the stream. On the top of the ridge above the town—not, however, exactly behind it, but a little lower down—a Turkish redoubt of considerable size had been constructed, and from its dominant altitude completely commanded the Roumanian position at Oltenitza. In 1854 the Russians made batteries, whose grass-grown ruins are still visible on the plain. Subsequently an embankment was made along the river's bank to confine its waters to their proper bed, and prevent their overflow on the level meadows. This embankment, which is so thick that there is a road on the top of it, permitted the Roumanians to dispense with the necessity of constructing batteries. All that it was necessary to do was to escarp the inner face of the dam, so as to make it perpendicular, to break embrasures through the embankment, and bring up their guns into position. The shelter was singularly efficient, even a traverse being needed only on the flank of one battery, which was so low down the stream as to be in some degree enfiladed from the Turkish work on the top of the ridge.

But the most important event of the war on the Danube up to this time took place on the following day, May 11.

The branch of the Danube known as the Old Danube extends from Hirsova to opposite Brahilov. On this branch is situated the Turkish fortress of Matchin, and into it, as already stated, had been penned by the Russian batteries at both ends a portion of the Turkish flotilla. On Friday afternoon, May 11, the Turkish turret ship which had thrown the shells into the railway station at Galatz on the arrival of the Grand-duke Nicholas on the previous Sunday, steamed out from Matchin, followed by two gunboats, and dropped anchor under cover of the wooded end of an island, with its three masts visible above the trees. The Russian gunners from the batteries close to Brahilov, below the Roumanian barracks, opened fire from their light guns—the range

being about two and a half miles—but without effect. The general officer present, General Ssaloff, then gave directions for two 8-inch guns of position, mounted in the battery, to come into action. The first shot had no effect. The second, fired at a high elevation, with a low charge, was believed to have dropped on the deck of the turret ship, as immediately a heavy white smoke or steam rose from the ironclad, followed by huge flames, which ascended to a height of twenty feet. These were carried away by the wind at a slight angle, and were succeeded by a cloud of dark smoke or steam rising high into the air, and surrounded by black objects. A dull report was heard, and when the smoke cleared away the ironclad was gone! Nothing was to be seen of her but the mizen-mast standing far out of the water, and still flying the Turkish flag, which, curiously enough, the Turkish boats pulling to the rescue of the drowning sailors did not attempt to secure. These boats came from a second Turkish ironclad lying at the time a little further up the stream. Two Russian steam launches put off from Brahilov, boarded the wreck, gained the flag, gathered some of the *debris*, and picked up two men, both severely injured, and one of whom died almost immediately. The other was taken to the hospital, and stated that the commander of the vessel—the *Luftigellil*—had gone ashore at Matchin, and had given instructions to his second in command to get the ship into position, but not to open fire until he returned on board; and, as a fact, the Turkish ship did not reply by a single gun to the Russians. His object in going to Matchin was to arrange with four other gun vessels for a concerted attack on Brahilov, which of course was never delivered. Numerous explanations of the cause of the sinking of the vessel were given. The Turkish official despatch explained the loss as due to an accidental explosion, and there seems no reason to doubt that this was the case. At any rate, from the very nature of the evidence of the survivors, there is the strongest presumptive evidence of its truthfulness; for it would have been much easier for the captain to account for the loss of his ship in such a legitimate method as being destroyed by the enemy's fire, than to have to confess to the culpable negligence of leaving the magazine door open while men were smoking and lights being carried about. The vessel, which

was one of the most powerful Turkish war-ships on the river, had only three weeks previously passed quite close to the Roumanian shore as she proceeded up the main stream. She then caused quite a sensation in Brahilov by her size and hostile appearance. She did not, however, return by the main stream, but by the old arm of the Danube, entering a little below Hirsova. The Russian enthusiasm in the battery after the explosion was intense, and the officers embraced each other. At a review held at Ploiesti a few days subsequently, when the troops were in line, the Grand-duke Nicholas called in a loud voice for Lieutenant Romanofsky, the officer who was presumed to have pointed the gun which it was believed blew up the monitor. The young officer stepped forward, when the Grand-duke embraced him, and placed upon his breast the Cross of St. George, a decoration given only for gallantry in the field.

For the next month the Russians gradually mustered their forces along the line of the Danube, and slight affairs occurred from day to day; but with the exception of the single incident we are about to describe, they were of little significance. Reconnaissances were made from both sides with increasing frequency, but they were only as patrols sent forth from outposts. Russians or Turks embarked in boats, crossed to an island, were discovered; a lively fusillade followed, with positively no damage, the boats were drawn back, and there was quiet along the line. Sometimes the Turks teased the batteries and their supports with an irritating rain of rifle bullets from their hiding places on the far banks; the Russians replied only with shrapnel, as no other fire had been found so useful against a concealed enemy. Some wooden structures near the mouth of the Aluta were fired at and damaged by the southern guns; and, on the other hand, a column of Turks moving eastwards from Widdin exposed itself to view on the opposite bank, was caught in the act by a Roumanian battery, and forced to disperse. The Turks were also active on the upper part of the river, crossing in small parties and carrying off cattle, which the Roumanians, with surprising carelessness, left close to the water, and even on islands, without protection.

The exceptional incident we have referred to was the destruction of another Turkish monitor at Matchin, near Brahilov, early on Saturday

morning, May 26, which was one of the most daring deeds ever recorded in the history of warfare. Two steam launches with a handful of men steamed boldly into the midst of the Turkish flotilla, placed two torpedoes under one of the monitors, and succeeded in blowing it up and completely destroying it, without the loss of a single man on the Russian side. The little expedition which so successfully accomplished this exploit was composed of four small steam launches, two of which were to make the attack, and the two others to hold themselves in readiness to render assistance in case, as was probable, of an accident to either of the attacking ones. The two launches which were to make the attack were commanded by Lieutenants Dubasoff and Shestakoff, and manned, one by fourteen, the other by nine men. The crews were protected by an iron screen or awning, which covered the boat completely over from stem to stern, and which was sufficiently thick to stop a bullet. This screen, as well as the boat, was painted black, so as to be scarcely distinguishable at night; and the crew were thus protected against the fire of small-arms, except the man at the wheel, who directed the movements of the boat, and who was necessarily exposed. The crews embarked in the boats a little after twelve o'clock on Saturday, May 26, at a distance of about seven miles from where the Turkish monitors were lying. The night was dark and rainy, and the clouds completely obscured the moon, which nevertheless prevented the night from being one of complete pitchy darkness. There was just enough light to enable them to distinguish the dark masses of the Turkish gunboats without themselves being easily seen. After an hour's steaming they came within the immediate neighbourhood of the enemy's flotilla. The engines of the first launch made so much more noise than was desirable, that Lieutenant Dubasoff was four times compelled to stop for a while in sight of the enemy. As this was likely to attract attention, after the last stoppage he ordered Lieutenant Shestakoff to follow rapidly to the nearest monitor, which he intended to attack first. At the moment of giving this order they were about 400 feet from the monitor. The noise with which they were proceeding caused them to be hailed by the watch on the monitor after performing about half the distance. Lieutenant Dubasoff answered what he thought to be the

regulation reply, but he afterwards learnt that it was not in form, and that his mistake awakened immediate suspicion. The artillerymen, who had lain down for the night on deck, were awakened by the first report of the signal rifle. An excursion on the preceding night had doubtless attracted attention, and the monitors were on the *qui vive*. Indeed, the monitors, as was discovered on approaching them, had left their former anchorage and gone nearer Matchin. The Russians could distinctly hear a scuffling of feet, a rushing about of sailors, cries and shouts, and the voice of an officer commanding the men on board the monitor to prepare the guns for action. The monitor had her steam up, and, firing at the torpedo boat from her stern guns on the upper deck, might have inflicted considerable damage on it. Lieutenant Dubasoff therefore determined to make for the stern, and thereby escape danger, and deprive the vessel of her moving powers. Each boat was armed with two torpedoes, attached to the end of a long spar that projected from the bow. These spars were arranged to move on pivots, and could be swung round so as to describe a half circle. The torpedoes were so placed that they could be detached from the spars at any moment; and, in addition to this, long light chains were attached to them, by which they were to be tied on to any projecting part of the attacked ship, and they were connected with the boat by a fine flexible wire about 100 yards long. The officer in command carried a small electric battery fastened round his chest. A lively fusillade had now been opened upon the boat by the Turks, but in spite of this the launch of Dubasoff shot under the bow of the monitor, the chain which was fastened to the torpedo was flung round a chain or rope that was hanging from the bow of the ship; the torpedo was dropped from the spar, and the current of the river carried it against the bottom of the ship. The launch then shot away again until the full length of the electric wire had been reached. The officer applied it to the battery round his chest, and at the same instant a huge volume of water rose up into the air, which half filled and nearly swamped Dubasoff's launch, and a fearful explosion was heard, which completely drowned the shouts and cries and firing of the Turks. In the meantime the other monitors became alarmed, and without knowing the cause fired at random, and a fearful

scene of terror and confusion ensued. They not only fired on the Russian launches, that still kept dodging about like mosquitoes, but in their panic and confusion fired into each other. The bullets rattled over the iron awnings of the launches, but did them no harm. The bow of one was, however, pierced by a piece of a shell that exploded near it. The two launches were now on opposite sides of the doomed ship. Dubasoff perceived that the monitor was sinking down, but very slowly; while the Turks continued to fire away blindly, but incessantly, both with small arms and cannon. Dubasoff called to Shestakoff to try and place another torpedo in order to make sure of the ship, and the latter slipped in under the stern and put down another torpedo in the same manner as the previous one. He then shot off until he was at a safe distance, and applied the electric battery in the same manner. A still more terrible explosion followed, and parts of the ship and its furniture were blown high into the air. Then the monitor sunk rapidly, and after a few moments nothing but her masts were visible above water. The crew had all either been drowned or had escaped by swimming. Day now began to break, and the position of the two little launches within the near range of two other Turkish monitors became very critical. To add to the danger of the situation the screw of one of them got fouled and became unmanageable, while they perceived a Turkish launch from one of the other monitors bearing down on them. They opened a fire of small arms on the Turkish launch, which veered off, and showed no disposition to come any closer. One of the sailors got out into the water, and after several minutes succeeded in clearing the screw; and the two launches, having accomplished their mission of destruction, darted off, passed under the fire of the two other Turkish gunboats, escaped unhurt, and, rejoining their two consorts, returned in triumph to their place of starting.

As soon as the news arrived, the Grand-duke sent for the two officers who had performed the feat, as he wished to hear the story from their own lips, and judge for himself how much was to be attributed to luck, how much to skill and science, and whether it would be possible to repeat the experiment under like circumstances. Both the Russian officers received the Cross of St. George; and Major Murjesco, a Roumanian officer who shared in the daring enterprise, received the Cross

of St. Vladimir. The Turkish vessel thus destroyed was the *Hazi Rahman*, a sister ship to the *Luftigellil*, which was sunk near Matchin a few days before. She was a vessel of 2500 tons displacement, and was divided by water-tight bulkheads, which extended up to the upper deck, into nine compartments. It was probably owing to this arrangement of her interior that even after a torpedo had been successfully exploded immediately underneath her bow, and her fore hull had been driven in, she was yet observed to be sinking so slowly that it was deemed necessary to explode another torpedo under her quarter to insure her destruction.

The success of this torpedo attack encouraged the Russians to plan another expedition on a much larger scale against a squadron of ironclads which were lying at anchor near Sulina. Hobart Pasha, however, had been visiting the fleet, and had organized so complete a service of defence for vessels lying at anchor that he ventured to telegraph to the Porte, "Ships safe here; do not be anxious about them." Nor was this boast without foundation; for when on June 9 a flotilla of six torpedo boats came close to the squadron and began to charge the vessels, they were brought up suddenly by a chain, which, attached at intervals to guard-boats, formed a complete cordon round the vessels at anchor. Moreover, the Turks poured upon their enemies a deadly fire from small arms and mitrailleuses; while, to complete the misfortunes of the Russians, one of the torpedo boats exploded, and its captain and six of the crew were taken prisoners. After exploding one or two torpedoes, one of which slightly damaged the foremost Turkish vessel, the remainder of the torpedo launches had to beat a precipitate retreat without having effected any noteworthy injury.

This incident did much to lessen the fears of the Turks with regard to the torpedoes, the unseen terrors of which seemed at one time to threaten to produce general demoralization. Prior to the adoption of Hobart Pasha's plan of defence, the monitors at the Sulina mouth were actually in the habit of putting to sea at night to avoid an attack. It is well known that the probability of attack from an unseen enemy will demoralize the best and bravest in time; and a little excess of fear on the part of the crews of the ironclads need not be wondered at, when it is recollected that when they "turned in" to their hammocks at

night they had the uncomfortable consciousness that they might awake to find themselves whirled into the air with a storm of huge guns and ponderous machinery, masts, spars, and iron ribs, the roar of escaping steam, and the thunder of an exploding magazine.

The Czar left St. Petersburg for the seat of war on Saturday, June 2. For some time previously his Majesty had been troubled with sleeplessness. He would continually wake up during the night and ask for news from the seat of war, and when he was told none had been received he would get up and send off telegrams in all directions. His physician advised him to go as near as possible to the seat of war, and only the idea of this restored his cheerfulness. His Majesty arrived at Barboschi on the following Wednesday, and thence proceeded to Brahilov. This town was in a great state of excitement, and large crowds had gathered around the railway station waiting with wonderful patience in spite of the heat, which was almost intolerable. About 2000 soldiers had also obtained permission to leave their posts and come to the town without arms, and they lined both sides of the railway. Among others the two officers who blew up the Turkish monitor were present, with twenty sailors of the expedition, wearing on their uniform the Cross of St. George. His Majesty reached the Russian head-quarters at Ploiesti the same evening. The railway station there was decorated with flags, Roumanian and Russian, wherever room for flags could be found. In the centre of each gleamed an imperial crown with the abbreviation "A. II." in black, and laurel garlands surrounded the device. Palm branches lined both sides of the platform. In the suite of the Emperor were the Czarewitch and his brothers; Prince Gortschakoff, who brought his secretaries with him, hoping, it may be presumed, that now at last the dream of his life would be realized; General Ignatieff, the well-known former ambassador at Constantinople, who had been expressly summoned from Kieff by the Emperor; Generals Jomini and Hamburger; Marshal Adlerburg; General Milutine, the soldier who had had the courage and talent to re-organize the Russian army on liberal principles; General Suvaroff, a name once famous in Europe; and Vojescoff, with six other generals attached to his Majesty, and Dr. Baken. In other wars the gown has usually given place to the sword, for a time at least; but in this they

were to go hand-in-hand to consolidate the future laws of Bulgaria, which had been already drawn up, and translated into the native language.

The sun had just sunk below the horizon when a shrill whistle announced the coming of the Emperor, who was received with hearty cheers. The reception was short, and in five minutes the road, a mere track, newly covered with smooth round stones from the bed of the river, was broken into clouds of dust, reddened by the evening light. The way was not beset by Russian troops, being guarded by the few Roumanian soldiers who wandered about on horseback near it; but when the Czar had driven 300 yards he saw lining the road and the streets some Bulgarian soldiers of all shapes and sizes, but mostly young, dressed in a dark uniform about the same colour as their faces. These men broke into a weird song, which dates from the insurrection of 1868, and asks help from the Czar. It says, "We have suffered long enough, and must be true to one another. O thou, great Russia, and thou, our sister Servia, why have you forgotten us? Why do you not come and help us?" At another part of the long line more than 4000 Bulgarians sung a new song, thanking the Czar for coming to help them. No one could come in contact with these people without being certain that a great longing existed among them to be freed from Turkish misrule. The whole interest centred in these Bulgarian soldiers, for Ploiesti itself was but languidly demonstrative. Bread and salt were given to the Emperor by the Bulgarians on a silver plate, which had engraved on it as follows:—"We are overcome with joy, we who trust in you; we give praise to you, we who love your name." An address read by the Bishop said that those who had been forced to abandon their country were fortunate in that they were the first to meet their deliverer, and thank him for undertaking the great enterprise so long hoped for from the Russian monarch and their Russian brethren.

It was undoubtedly generally felt by the Bulgarians that the Czar came to them as a liberator, for he had accustomed the people on both sides of the Danube to regard him as their only friend and helper, and had especially placed himself before the unhappy Bulgarians as a liberator from the yoke under which they groaned. Those who chose to cast in their lot with that of Russia were treated with extraordinary

friendliness and distinction. If they wished to enter the army as privates, they were encouraged by seeing that the work of the common soldier was made light for one of their nation. If they sought to wear the epaulet, they were allowed to enter the military schools after a shorter probation in the ranks than that required from native Russians. Schools were specially favoured by the Imperial family when they contained Bulgarian children; and a Bulgarian battalion which was formed at Kischeneff was so distinguished by the Czar, that there was scarcely a man of it but had some tale to tell of Imperial condescension. He used to speak to them one by one concerning themselves and their history, and gave orders that their opinions were not to be contradicted roughly, nor their utterance suppressed. In their misery and terror, the people of Bulgaria looked to Europe for help, which came not. Russia alone met them half-way with present kindness and promise of future help towards freedom. The natural result followed. All hearts turned towards the Czar; and if a *plebiscite* could have been taken, it is probable that, failing any certainty of other protection, Bulgaria would have placed herself unreservedly in the hands of the one Potentate who had shown kindness towards her. The country was prostrate, and naturally eagerly embraced the first hand held out to lift her up.

On the following day the Bishop of the Bulgarian Church at Bucharest and other chief Bulgarians were presented to the Czarewitch by Prince Tcharkasky, and thanked him for the sacrifice made by Russia to deliver Bulgaria from the Turkish yoke. The Prince answered that he hoped, by the grace of God, their destinies would soon be fulfilled. Then they addressed General Ignatieff, and thanked him for his political labours at Constantinople. In his reply the General told them that he had fought for them against Greeks as well as Turks.

Prince Charles of Roumania had come from Bucharest to Ploiesti to welcome the Emperor, and on the following day his Majesty returned the visit by proceeding to Bucharest. The Prince and Princess of Roumania went to the station to meet him, and the reception given to his Majesty in the Roumanian capital was as grand and as hearty as possible. The streets were lined with immense crowds of people; the whole city

was gaily decorated, and in the streets from the station to the palace triumphal arches were erected.

The semi-oriental character of the city is little adapted for impressive decorations, but Oriental taste was displayed in the rich colours and the rich stuffs exhibited. Thus the narrow crooked streets were transformed into large bazaars of flags, tapestries, carpets, Indian shawls, and rugs. But perhaps the most striking features of the scene were the dark-eyed and beautiful Roumanian women, who clustered at every balcony and window. The Emperor met with an enthusiastic reception from the people—a reception that was really remarkable. As he passed in a state carriage from the station to the palace flowers were thrown from almost every window, and the utmost enthusiasm was displayed. Before returning to the head-quarters at Ploiesti in the evening, the mayor of Bucharest presented an address to his Majesty, stating that the town was happy to salute in his august person the most illustrious guest who had ever honoured their country. By exalted deeds his Majesty had been enabled to engrave his name profoundly on the hearts of his subjects and in the annals of history. The benign assistance which the Russian government had generously accorded them in the time of adversity caused the entire Roumanian nation to consider the sojourn of his Majesty among them as a proof of good feeling, especially under the present circumstances, and as a powerful guarantee of the future welfare of what had only recently become the capital of a completely independent state. The town of Bucharest that day opened its gates to the Liberator of the nations of the East. She endeavoured to lift her voice to greet with the most profound respect the great Monarch who, by that visit, had deigned to render nobly memorable the new phase into which Roumania had entered free and independent.

Early in the war a Bulgarian committee, at Bucharest, arranged with the Russian military authorities for the incorporation of any number of Bulgarian volunteers in the Russian army. Certain conditions, however, were stipulated for, as, for instance, that they should wear a uniform resembling the national costume, and that they should serve under Bulgarian officers. The Grand-duke Nicholas acceded to the proposition of the committee so far as the uniform was concerned,

and consented to the nomination of Bulgarians as under-officers. But the officers of the Bulgarian legion were to be Russians.

The legion was composed provisionally of six battalions of infantry, each of five companies, and of six sotnias (hundreds), or three squadrons of cavalry. It was divided into three brigades, each comprising two battalions and two squadrons, and the whole was placed under the command of General Stoliff. Every day Servians, Bulgarians, and Roumanians joined the Russian army. Some were refugees, and others doubtless joined from patriotic motives. None were allowed to remain who did not at once consent to be incorporated with the regular soldiery, for the Commander-in-chief was determined not to have any volunteer irregulars hanging at his rear. As regards pay, the volunteers received the same as the regular soldiers, and they likewise participated in the privileges enjoyed by the latter. For a time the Bulgarian battalions were equipped by the Pan-slavist Committee at Moscow; but although the Russian Government was willing that the maintenance of the legion should be partly or wholly borne by that society, it soon took the equipment into its own hand. To prevent the legion from being too local in its aspirations, and to Russianize the Bulgarians as much as possible while in the Czar's service, the cadres of the legion were partly made up of regular Russian soldiers, in the proportion of two to one of the volunteers. The Grand-duke Nicholas bestowed upon the legion a new national banner, of what were designated the "Slav colours," and which was presented with much solemn ceremony. The colours consist of

a square flag, formed by three horizontal stripes of white, red, and blue. In the middle of the flag is a black cross ornamented with golden arabesques, and in the branches of the cross, on the one side of the banner, is the image of Our Lady of Tverskaia; on the other pictures of the Bulgarian saints, Cyril and Methodius. On the occasion of the presentation an altar was erected, and the volunteers fell in around it. Among those present was a noted Bulgarian leader, an old man, who bore the name of the "Eagle of the Balkans," and who had persistently taken part in every insurrection which had been excited in his native country. After the colours had been blessed they were nailed to the staff, which was of black wood surmounted by a silver-gilt lancehead of the old Russian pattern. The first three nails were driven by the Grand-duke Nicholas himself, then single nails were fixed by the son of the Grand-duke, by the chief of the staff, by the commandant of the irregular troops, and by the other high functionaries of the army. Finally, the Grand-duke called to the front the Eagle of the Balkans, and graciously handed him the hammer. Crossing himself with it, and offering up an appropriate prayer, this latter in turn drove in his nail. The hammer was then passed on to minor celebrities; the last nail being driven in by the actual standard-bearer, a non-commissioned officer. More prayers were said, the men presented arms, and the colours were formally handed over, the Grand-duke addressing the volunteers in these words, "I congratulate you, my children, and I hope that you will fight heroically under the folds of these colours, and deliver your brethren from Turkish slavery."

CHAPTER XIX.

Turkish Defensive Military Preparations—Equipment and Numbers of the Turkish Army—Increased Facilities of Transport—Turkish Plan of Campaign—Position of the Turkish Army on the Outbreak of Hostilities—Fears of an Immediate Invasion of the Dobrudscha—Strengthening of Varna, Shumla, Silistria, Rustchuk, and Widdin—Turkish *Ordre de Bataille* in Europe—Description of the Forces—Deficiency of Cavalry and Artillery—Sketches of the Commander-in-Chief and his principal Generals—Appearance and Characteristics of the Turkish Army—Food of the Troops—Turkish Officers—Sanitary Arrangements—Defective Hospital Arrangements—Turkish Doctors—Feeling among the Turkish Population at the Seat of War—Fatalism—Indifference to Coming Events—Suspension of Navigation on the Danube—Important Correspondence on the Subject between the Governments of Great Britain and Austria—Views of the British Government Communicated to Russia—Satisfactory Assurances of the Russian Government—Similar Assurance demanded from Turkey by Austria—Reply of the Porte—Expectations as to Turkish Naval Operations on the Danube—Description of the River—The Turkish Fleet on the Danube—Hobart Pasha's Plan of Operations Rejected—Erection of Russian Batteries on the Roumanian Shore—The River Blockaded by Russian Torpedoes—The Turkish Fleet reduced to Inactivity—Brief *resumé* of Naval Operations—Description of the Turkish Sailor—Lax Discipline in the Turkish Fleet—Scenes on board the Vessels—Events at Constantinople—Proceedings in the Turkish Parliament—Debates on the Progress of the War and Animadversions on the Conduct of the War Minister—Excitement in Constantinople at the Capture of Soukhoum Kaleh and the Rising in the Caucasus—Publication of Decrees Proclaiming the Sultan *Ghazi*, or Conqueror, and Hallowing the War against Russia—Objection of the Christians to Serve in such a War—Reasons for the Sultan not joining the Army—Description of a Sitting of the Ottoman Parliament by Mr. Layard, the English Ambassador—Orderly Nature of the Proceedings—Ability of the President—Reception of the News of the Fall of Ardahan at Constantinople—Strong Feeling against Redif Pasha and the Palace Party—The Sultan's Promise of an Amnesty to the Bulgarians Frustrated—Interviews of the British Ambassador with his Majesty on the Subject—Softas proceed to the Chamber of Deputies and Demand the Immediate Dismissal of Redif Pasha and another Minister—Proclamation of a State of Siege in Constantinople—Arrest of a large number of the Party of Midhat Pasha—Change of Tactics on the part of the Government as to the Softas Demonstration—Powers conferred on the Authorities under the State of Siege—Embassies deprived of the Privilege of Corresponding in Cypher with their Consuls—Treatment of Colonel Dr. Temple—Offer of Mediation by Germany—Important Despatch from Mr. Layard on the General Situation at the end of May, and urging on the English Government the desirability of an endeavour to bring about Peace—The Dangers to England of a Prolongation of the War—Feeling of the Christians in Turkey with regard to Russian Rule—Forced Loan in Turkey—Discussion on the Subject in the Chamber of Deputies—Military Preparations at Constantinople—Life in the City—Distress among the Inhabitants—Turkish Patriotism.

WHILST the Russians were directing the strategic advance of their armies to the valley of the Danube, and massing them in accordance with their plan of the campaign, the Turks, on their part, were actively engaged with their defensive military preparations.

The Sultan's Government only began to arm seriously little more than a year before the outbreak of the present war; but it found in the facility of modern communications, and in the industrial enterprise of foreign countries, the means to place in the field an army which, both as regarded its numbers and weapons, was such as no Power in the world could have created in the same time fifty years before. The Sultan only had to find the living material of warfare, and it could be equipped to any amount by that cosmopolitan enterprise which concerns itself with such matters. Krupp made cannon; and small-arms by the hundred thousand and munitions in incalculable quantities, and of the most scientific preparation, were supplied by the United States. The army raised by the Porte from the commencement of 1876, amounting, after all allowance has been

made for exaggeration, to between 300,000 and 400,000 men, could not have been equipped in the old times; and what is of equal importance, it could hardly have been transported. The men were not now obliged to toil for months over the wild tracts of Asia, or to sicken in the holds of miserable wooden vessels: they were sent by steamer from the nearest port of their province to the Bosphorus, and thence to Varna or Trebizond or Batoum. The consequence was that the whole strength of the Turkish Empire was put forth, and the campaign was made one of extraordinary difficulty to the invaders. The Turks, on the whole, were determined to stand on the defensive. This accorded with their military qualities and with their political position, as it had been created by the last two centuries. They had the experience of more than one war, and particularly that of 1854, to lead them to suppose that their soldiers would fight to the best effect if they were not forced to manœuvre in the field—but subsequent events showed that the qualities of the Turks for attack and for fighting "in the open" had been very much underrated. The attitude which the Porte

had for a long time been accustomed to take, politically, in presence of Europe—that of a Power utterly unambitious, and which only resisted unjust aggression—also tended to give an analogous character to its military bearing. By standing on the defensive the Turks hoped to be able to repulse their enemies, and at the same time they would appear before the world as fighting for their own territory and their own homes.

On the outbreak of hostilities the Turkish army had considerable forces at Widdin, and the remainder of its troops in Europe were scattered along the Danube, and in rear of the stream as far as Varna. When the Russian advance took place the Turkish staff appear to have been under the impression that the narrow neck of land between Galatz and the mouth of the Danube, which forms the northern portion of the Dobrudscha, was the menaced point. Troops were therefore somewhat hurried in that direction, and suffered from sickness contracted in the unhealthy marsh land upon which they were thrown without proper stores, supplies, food, or medicines. A wiser and calmer feeling subsequently prevailed, and the main bulk of the Turkish forces was massed towards Silistria and Rustchuk. The Turks chiefly confined their preparations to the strengthening of Varna, Shumla, Silistria, Rustchuk, and Widdin, which were all made more or less formidable; but in various other ways they availed themselves of the long delay of the Russians in crossing to make up for lost opportunities. Throughout, however, as we have already observed, they seemed content to remain passively on the defensive.

We annex the Turkish *ordre de bataille* in Europe at the commencement of the war, according to the most trustworthy information obtainable.

Commander-in-chief, the Sirdar Ekrem, Abdul Kerim Pasha. Chief of the Staff, the Liva Hafiz Pasha, assisted by Nedshib Pasha; head-quarters, Rustchuk. Commander of the Danubian army, the Mushir Achmed Eyoub Pasha. Generals at Widdin, the Mushir Osman Pasha, the Feriks Tahir and Adil, the Livas Kara Ali, Assuf, Hatil, Kerim, Achmed, and Hassan—eighty battalions, sixteen squadrons, 174 field guns. Generals at Silistria, Ferik Sulami, the Livas Osman, Hassan, and Hussein—twenty battalions, eight squadrons, thirty-two field guns. At Nikopolis, the Ferik Feizullah—five battalions. At Rustchuk, the Ferik Nedfib, the Livas Delawer

and Chalil—fifteen battalions, three squadrons, twenty-four field guns. At Shumla, the Feriks Fazley and Achmed, the Livas Risaat, Selim, Jaboi, Hussein, Refchid (the latter the Prussian officer Strecker)—thirty battalions, five squadrons, forty-two field guns. In the Dobrudscha (Matchin), Hirsova, Rassowa, Isakchi, Tultcha, Babadagh, Tchernavoda, the Liva Ali—fourteen battalions, six field guns. In Sophia, the Liva Tscherkess Hassan—thirty battalions, four squadrons, twenty-four field guns. In Jamboli, eight battalions; in Varna, the Liva Blum Pasha—twenty-five battalions, eight squadrons, thirty-six field guns (some Egyptian). Besides these, the five following Livas were attached to the various commanders in the Danubian army:—Hadschi Raschid, Mehemed, Topal Achmed, Hussein Saik, and Achmed Saik. The total of the army in Danubian Bulgaria and in the Balkans amounted to 227 battalions, forty-four squadrons, and 338 field guns. There were also in Rustchuk and Shumla some batteries of mitrailleuses. The strength of the battalions and squadrons varied greatly. Those that had recently come from Syria and Anatolia were, as a rule, above 1000 strong, divided into eight companies; while others, which had been through the Servian War, sometimes did not exceed 300. The average strength of the battalion may be set down at 700, that of the squadron at 150 combatants. Assuming these figures to be correct, Northern Bulgaria at the commencement of the war, including the fortress garrisons, was occupied by about 160,000 infantry, 6500 horse, and an artillery having 338 field guns. In addition to these there were 20,000 Circassian horse and a large number of Bashibazouks. If the constitution of this army be examined, with a view to discover the relative numbers in it of the various branches of the service, a simple arithmetical calculation will show that for every 1000 foot soldiers there were two and one-eighth cannon, and that the proportion between foot and horse insisted upon by modern military science was far from being observed. In this respect it is required that for every 1000 foot soldiers there shall be three guns, and that the cavalry must be from one-ninth to one-eleventh of the infantry. Hence it follows that the Turkish army of the Danube was slightly deficient in artillery, and very deficient with respect to cavalry. The want of cavalry was partly com-

compensated for by the Circassians, who are excellent rough riders; and in order to add more coherency to their ranks, they were assembled at Constantinople, Adrianople, and Sophia, formed into regiments, and furnished with officers from the regular army. In addition to the army in Bulgaria, the Turkish European forces were thus distributed at the commencement of the war:—In Albania, the Commander of the corps was Mushir Ali Saib; head-quarters, Scutari; the Feriks, Mustapha and Hafiz Pasha; the Livas, Vesil, Ipmet, and Salih Pasha—twenty-six battalions, one squadron, and thirty-six field guns; 18,000 men. In Herzegovina, the Mushir Suleiman Pasha, Savfet, Fuad, Mustei, and Asen—thirty-seven battalions, fifty-four field and mountain guns. On the Greek frontier, the Ferik Achmed, head-quarters in Janina; the Liva Ali (in Arta), Ibrahim (in Janina), and Radschib (in Salonica)—twenty-five battalions, four squadrons, thirty field guns. In Bosnia, the Feriks Mehemed Ali in Novi Bazar, Hussein Hussni, Djemil, and Osman—fourteen battalions, two squadrons, eighteen field and mountain guns. In Constantinople, the Mushir Zamed Pasha—thirty-six battalions, twenty squadrons, forty-two field guns. In the islands in the *Ægean* Sea, Commandant of Crete, Mushir Raruf; on the other islands there were several Livas, but mostly Mira-alajs or Kaimakans—sixteen battalions and eighteen field guns. Finally, in Nissa and Toplitza-Thale there was a division something similar to a European brigade, placed there to guard the frontier of Servia—six battalions, four squadrons, and twelve field guns. Altogether the Turkish army in Europe may thus be fairly estimated to have amounted to 412 battalions, seventy-five squadrons, and 590 field guns, with a few batteries of mitrailleuses—290,000 infantry, and 12,000 horse.

Abdul Kerim, the Sirdar Ekrem, or Commander-in-chief of the Turkish armies at the commencement of the war, was an old Turk in every sense of the word—in ideas, in years, in military notions, and in manners. His military education he received forty years ago at the Military Academy in Vienna, then under the direction of Field-marshal Hanslab. After having distinguished himself in the Crimean war, and in the suppression of revolutionary risings in Armenia and Bulgaria, he was appointed general of the 2nd Army Corps. Hussein Avni Pasha, who unfortunately fell an untimely

victim to the cruel dagger of the fanatic Hassan, so esteemed Abdul Kerim's abilities that he drew him as Kaimakan into the Ministry of War, of which he afterwards became independent chief. On the outbreak of the war with Servia, Abdul Kerim was chosen Commander-in-chief; but he continued to hold the office of Minister of War until the appointment of Redif Pasha to that post in 1877. Abdul Kerim is more a tactician than a strategist, and on a field of battle is more skilful in defence than in offensive action. In the Servian war he gave ample proofs of a sound judgment and clear perception. Owing doubtless to his military training in Vienna, he has a great dislike to irregular troops and militia. The management of his general staff was at first intrusted by Abdul Kerim to Hafiz Pasha and Nedshib Pasha, who were, however, subsequently replaced by Aziz Pasha.

Hafiz Pasha was for eight years a pupil of the Austrian Military Academy, where he graduated with high honours. After having been chief engineer in the construction of the Roumelian railways, he was charged with the suppression of the Bulgarian insurrection in 1876.

Nedshib Pasha, who was also during the Servian campaign chief of Abdul Kerim's general staff, spent some time at the Military School in Brussels, and his whole bearing indicates a European education. The fall of Abdul Aziz first led to Nedshib's promotion to a superior rank. Having joined the conspirators, he was appointed a Ferik, and shortly afterwards general of the newly-formed army in the Herzegovina.

Aziz Pasha, their successor on the general staff, called the Turkish Moltke, was undoubtedly one of the most eminent Turkish generals. He began his military studies in Austria, and first served in the 14th regiment of infantry at Linz. Later on he went to Berlin, where he served two years in the artillery, and then returned to Constantinople. His stay there, however, did not last long. After a short time he again returned as secretary of the Ottoman Legation to the Prussian capital, and remained there six years. His experiences acquired abroad were so appreciated at home, that after being four years again in practical service, he was nominated general of a brigade, at the head of which he so distinguished himself in the war against Servia, that at the commencement of the present war he was made general of a

division. It was chiefly owing to Aziz Pasha's influence as commander of the artillery, that the Turkish army is provided with the best Krupp guns. Aziz, a Mussulman in every sense of the word, and proud to be a Turk, joined energy of action to an indomitable will, and might therefore be considered to supply those important military qualities in which Abdul Kerim, his chief, was wanting.

Achmed Eyoub Pasha, the mushir, forms a strong contrast to all the generals hitherto mentioned, having only passed through the Military School in Constantinople. In 1876 he was the real Commander-in-chief against Servia, and at the outbreak of the present war held the first place in the Danube army, not exactly under Abdul Kerim Pasha, but rather as his co-ordinate. All preparations for the campaign and means of defence in the Quadrilateral—Silistria, Rustchuk, Shumla, and Varna—were taken under his personal direction, and he worked with indefatigable energy and perseverance. Despite his white hair and beard, he is only forty-eight years of age.

Suleiman Pasha, who had only recently been raised to the rank of mushir, commanded in the Herzegovina, and opened the present campaign on the Turkish side by attacking the Montenegrins. He was formerly director of the Military Academy in Stamboul, and is greatly esteemed by the more educated of the Turkish officers. In the Servian war he also gained the confidence of the troops, who fully trusted in his valour and strategic abilities.

Ferik Achmed, commander of Janina, is one of those few Janissaries rescued from the general massacre in 1826. He is an old warrior, famous for his intrepidity, and who never during the eight decades of his eventful life troubled himself the least about reading or writing.

Mushir Osman Pasha, to whom the defence of Widdin was committed, obtained his rank as a reward for his conduct at Saitschar, where he succeeded in repelling the forces of the Servians.

The general appearance and characteristics of the Turkish army in Europe were thus described by a special correspondent of the *Times*, writing from Shumla at the end of May:—"To begin at the base, I have everywhere found the rank and file sound. Take your samples whencesoever you like—either from the Egyptians at Varna, the Arabs at Rustchuk, or the mixed races here, among cavalry, artillery, or infantry, and the result is the same. You get tough, broad-should-

dered, patient-looking, and obedient soldiers. They have their vices, but their especial strength lies in their perfect sobriety. As regards food, on Friday (the Turkish Sunday) there is an extra treat in the way of a pilauf of boiled rice, with just a suspicion of minced lamb among it. On ordinary days there is 'chaba'—that is, rice, water, and fat for breakfast, and supper too. This mess is eaten with black bread, of which two small loaves weighing half an oke each (an oke is about 3 lbs.) are served out to each man daily. So much for the Turkish private, who is as good a piece of raw stuff to make an army out of as the most exacting martinet would wish to handle. But they do not form an army yet. The officers do not impress one at all favourably, partly because most of them are so evidently new to their business, two out of three having been newly promoted from the ranks without any previous training, and partly from the almost total absence of that "gentlemanly" bearing which more or less sets its stamp upon men holding a commission in most European armies. The sanitary arrangements in the field are good, and the public decency of the men might well be imitated at Aldershot. Latrines are constantly being opened and filled up, and every care is apparently taken to keep the air of the camp as sweet as nature on this fine hillside has made it. I wish I could speak as favourably of the hospital arrangements. They are simply abominable. It is a misnomer to call the rough preparations for mitigating the enormous amount of human suffering which is coming "arrangements." The Turkish doctors—I hope they will excuse me for saying it—are, medically speaking, nowhere. Their existence among a race of fatalists is almost an anachronism, and they are extremely self-sufficient and jealous of rivals. Allah help the poor sick and wounded Turks when their hour of trial comes. There are two English doctors, who are nominally in charge of the ambulances, but they are for ever being intrigued against and baffled in their great exertions to introduce something like system. One instance of the poverty of the surgical provision here must suffice; the quantity of chloroform issued to the ambulance is just enough to provide for four operations to every 9000 men!"

The same gentleman, writing from Rustchuk on May 15, thus described the state of affairs and general feeling amongst the Turkish civilian

population:—"There has been a great exodus of all sorts of civilians from here, as might be expected, but, so far as I can discover, very few Turks or their families have left. The consuls have all sent their wives and children away, but the fatalist Turk has no notion of leaving his usual haunts, nor of allowing his family to do so either, merely because there are a hundred thousand or two of Russians coming over to try and knock these batteries about our ears. The Mahometan natives go about what I was about to call their business in their usual slow and stately manner, just as if Rustchuk were as safe as Grosvenor Square. Men of all ages and conditions, from the old turbaned patriarch telling his beads to the beardless semi-Parisian-looking youths in fezzes, whose present business in life is to roll up cigarettes, and look through opera-glasses at the foe—all these saunter slowly about the place, as unconcerned as if there were no such thing as any disturbance in the East, and the Russians were all in the moon. There is something wonderfully captivating to the stranger in this universal exhibition of *sangfroid*."

When war was first declared the navigation of the Danube remained open; but as early as April 29 the Porte sent instructions to the Turkish Commander-in-chief with regard to the measures he was authorized to take in view of military operations on the river. These instructions were to the effect that, the Danube being considered as a line of defence, the rules concerning the commerce of neutrals at sea could not in this case be applied; consequently the Commander of the Forces was at liberty to adopt such measures as he might consider advisable for military operations. He had especially the right to suspend navigation; to detain and requisition neutral vessels on payment of an indemnity; to compel them to leave the ports; to assign to them ports of refuge—and that under the gravest penalties, such as confiscation of the vessel and its cargo, and, should it be found necessary, the application of the regulations relating to spies. He was, in short, authorized to issue such proclamations as he might consider necessary, providing that the measures he took were really dictated by the necessities of war, and provided also that in case of confiscation he referred the matter to a special council, which he must not fail to appoint beforehand, and which would be charged to deliver a judgment as strictly in accordance with rule as possible.

On the following day (April 30) the Turkish Commander-in-chief accordingly issued a notice stating that, from May 3, the whole line of the Danube surrounding the territory of the Ottoman Empire would be considered under martial law. For this reason the International Regulations in respect to the navigation of neutral and commercial ships would not have force there, and all ships were prohibited from navigating on the above line. Any ship or steamer, small or large, found so navigating without the authority of the Government, would be seized with its cargo, and its captain would be considered and treated as a spy.

We have seen in the previous chapter, that immediately the Russians occupied Galatz, they also issued an order that after a few hours the river would be no longer available for traffic. This interference with the free navigation of the Danube naturally excited considerable attention in Austria and Great Britain, and several important communications on the subject passed between the Governments of England, Austria, Russia, and Turkey. On May 15 Lord Derby informed Lieutenant-colonel Siborne that her Majesty's Government were advised that no doubt could be raised on the question whether the Danube was a neutral river or the navigation of the Danube free. But with regard to the question whether the Russians and Turks, being at war, and carrying on military operations on the bank of the Danube, might impede, for military purposes, by torpedoes and other obstructions, the use of the river, the law officers, while viewing the case as an exceptional one, and the stoppage of navigation as justifiable only by the necessities of the war, were of opinion that those necessities might and did justify the stoppage of navigation. It will be seen, on reference to Chapter XV., that a very similar explanation was given by the President of the Austro-Hungarian Parliament, in answer to a question addressed to him on the subject.

In a despatch to the Austrian Government Lord Derby intimated that the British Government would be "happy to join that of Austria in taking any steps for the protection of neutral commerce and interests;" and on May 24 Lord Augustus Loftus informed the Russian Government that her Majesty's Government felt it their duty to reserve in the most formal manner, as regarded the belligerent Powers, the principle of the liberty of the navigation of the Danube; and that they claimed that

the present exceptional state of things should not in any manner be cited as a precedent to the prejudice of the freedom of its navigation; that the restrictions on that freedom which might be rendered necessary by the exigencies of war should be regulated by the principles of international right; that those restrictions should not exceed the limits of absolute necessity; and that so soon as the circumstances of the war permitted, the belligerent Powers should come to an understanding with the European Powers to restore the freedom of the navigation of the river.

Previously, however (on 30th April), Prince Gortschakoff had addressed a despatch to the Russian representative at Vienna, and it was communicated by Count Beust to Lord Derby on May 23. In it Prince Gortschakoff said his Excellency was invited by order of the Emperor to declare, in the most formal manner, to Count Andrassy, that the Imperial Cabinet considered the interruption of the Danube to be only a temporary incident, rendered inevitable by the existing state of war, but which in no way prejudiced, as regarded the future, the principle of the free navigation of the river; that the Imperial Cabinet would do everything that might be possible to confine the temporary obstacles opposed to the navigation, as regarded their extent and duration, within the strictest limits imposed by the necessities of war; and finally, that the Imperial Cabinet engaged itself to concert with the Austro-Hungarian Government for the re-establishment of the liberty of the river as soon as it should be possible.

On May 22 a long despatch on the same subject was addressed by Count Andrassy to Count Zichy, in which he said that Austria expected the Porte to give assurances as positive as those which had been given by Russia. As Austria did not wish to encumber the operations of the belligerents on the Danube, and as she had exacted from all the captains of Austro-Hungarian vessels, as well as from all her people, that they should conform themselves to the principles and to the rules of the law of nations respecting the commerce of neutrals with belligerent Powers, she likewise exacted of the Porte that she should conform herself strictly to those principles, and that she should respect the rights of Austria as a neutral Power. An Austro-Hungarian vessel which might be in one of the ports of the Danube could neither be confiscated nor seized unless it had violated the prin-

ciples of the law of nations, by the transport of troops, arms, or other contraband of war. Austria had equally the right to exact that the property of her subjects which happened to be on those ships should be respected in an absolute manner; and she demanded, in virtue of the law of nations, the protection of the local authorities in favour of her people and of their property, as well as the inviolability of her rights guaranteed by the treaties. Finally, Austria insisted upon the duties imposed on the belligerent Powers with respect to the neutrality formulated by the Treaty of London of the year 1871, touching the works executed, and the establishments created, by the European Commission of the Danube at the mouth of that river, as well as touching the administrative and technical service of that commission, which, she said, in no case ought to be injured by the military operations.

In his reply, on behalf of the Porte, dated 9th June, Safvet Pasha said the Ottoman Government could not be, and had not been, indifferent to the injury caused to neutral commerce on the Danube by the measures necessitated by the operations of war, and had neglected no step to make the effects as little felt as possible. On the other hand, it was to be observed that the evil was to a great extent caused by the unusual action of Russia, who by invading suddenly, and without previous notice, the territory of the Principalities and the left bank of the Danube, and obliging the Imperial army to take effective and energetic measures of defence on the opposite bank, left no time or means for international commerce to protect its interests, and to withdraw its ships and goods from the consequences of the war. No restrictive measures had been taken on the Danube by the Ottoman Government which were not justified and rendered necessary by the paramount interest of defending the national territory. The Porte entirely shared the views of the British and Austrian Governments as to the principle of free navigation on the Danube, and as regarded the restrictive measures then in force, which were and could only be of an essentially provisional and temporary character. The employment of those measures did not, therefore, affect the principles and regulations applicable to the navigation of the Danube, which would again come into force as soon as the necessities of the war permitted.

Although it was expected that in military affairs

the Turks would act on the defensive, it was naturally presumed that with a very considerable river flotilla and the navigable mouth of the river in their own hands, and with the advantage also of railway communication between two inland points on the river and two separate ports on the the Black Sea—that is, from Varna by rail to Rustchuk, and from Kustendji to Tchernavoda—they would make great use of the waters of the Danube to retard, if not altogether to obstruct, the passage of the river by the Russian army. Certain points and certain places were known to be the only practicable ones for the invasion. The history of past wars and the most average local knowledge clearly indicated the only accessible spots, and it was supposed that these places would be made absolutely unapproachable by means of torpedoes protected by earth batteries. The river, as it sweeps through the countries of Roumania on the left bank, of Bulgaria and the Dobrudscha on the right, takes a generally easterly course with a northern sweep towards Galatz, whence, after a few more curves, it finds its way to the Black Sea by a number of mouths. In the whole length of its course it is frequently split into various streams, branching away in great volume, and forming islands or traversing vast swamps in innumerable streamlets, which, however, after rains become deep channels. These diverging streams occasionally unite for considerable distances, and the whole body of water sweeps down with majestic force, and receives into its bosom the great confluent rivers the Jalomnitza, the Sereth, and the Pruth, with many others, on the Roumanian side, and many rivers of lesser note on the Bulgarian side. For the first few miles above Rustchuk the river, though rapid, presented no kind of obstacle to the movements of the Turkish ships. For many miles below there is no point of strategical importance until Turtukai is reached, which is on the Bulgarian side, and opposite to Oltenitza; but here an island is to be found which should have been held by the Turks.

After leaving Turtukai we come to Silistria, where the river proper branches out into several channels formed by three or four large islands. There is also a water-way from a point on the Roumanian side opposite Silistria, which trends away further north and considerably inland of the main stream, and does not rejoin the Danube

until near Hirsova. In the meanwhile, the true stream sweeps round the Bulgarian shores until it reaches Rassoza, where it makes a northern curve, and where the Dobrudscha may be said to begin. Passing Tchernavoda, the terminus of the Kustendji Railway, and kept out from flooding the valley in which that railway lies by an embankment, the river then trends away to the north past Hirsova, where the stream which left the parent stream at Silistria rejoins the true Danube. It will thus be seen that the Russians for all that length of the river had, as it were, a back way or private water in the hands of their allies the Roumanians, which, owing to the position of Roumania at the beginning of the war, it was not thought right the Turks should occupy. Now this is the key of the other parts of the Danube where a similar geographical formation exists—a key, not in the strategic acceptation of the term, but rather in a grammatical sense; so that this stream, known by the name of the Borcea, may be taken as illustrating all the other courses of the river. It will be seen that it left a highway open to the Russians on the river which was never anticipated by the Turks, and which they were too slow, too indolent, or too unprepared to intercept, though by promptitude and intelligence it could easily have been effected.

Bearing in mind what has been said of the advantages of these divergent streams in the hands of an enemy who was able to possess himself of them by their being in the country of an ally, it is necessary to explain that just below Hirsova another extensive and highly important system of separate streams begins; for here an immense tract of islands, marsh, and lakes lies embraced by two chief streams, the one passing away through Roumania being the deeper and better channel, and the other skirting the coast of the Dobrudscha. At this part the Delta of the Danube is very varied; in many places the shores of the river are dry and firm, affording every facility for landing, but in others it is swampy. The configuration of the figure described by these two streams may be considered as an oblong, roughly speaking 100 miles long by 20 wide, lying about north and south.

The point where these streams reunite is below Brahilov, which stands just above the confluence, on the deep stream on the Roumanian side. Galatz, the confluence of the Sereth, and further down of the Pruth, are the next objects on the

river, which for all practical purposes may then be considered as one stream until the final bifurcation above Tultcha occurs. For all this distance, as far as naval operations were concerned, the waters afforded fair play to both adversaries; for after leaving Reni on the left bank as far as the bifurcation above alluded to, it was practically impossible for the Russians to do much harm to the fleet by guns from the shore. But below the bifurcation the Russians held possession of the northern arm of the mouth of the Danube, known as the Kilia, and it was by that means that they were enabled to forestall the Turks and put down torpedoes in the river at that point. Tultcha, standing on an advanced spur of the table-land of the Dobrudscha, is the next point passed on the southern branch of the river after Reni. Naturally extremely strong, it is also the key to the whole of the Dobrudscha, and from it lead excellent roads over undulating plains, by way of Babadagh to Kustendji, and thence to Varna. A few miles below Tultcha the river again splits, the middle arm forming the present great highway of water communication between all countries lying on the Danube and the Black Sea. This is the Sulina; the other arm trending further south, the St. George, is of little importance, being shallow and rocky.

The Turkish fleet on the Danube at the outbreak of the war consisted of the following vessels:—The *Luftigellil* (monitor), the *Hazi Rahman* (monitor), seven iron-clad gun-boats, four large armed despatch-boats, seven smaller vessels of the same description, four wooden gun-boats, sixty to eighty horse-power each, and two steam launches. Besides these there happened to be the *Rethymo*, Hobart Pasha's yacht. There were, however, no torpedoes at any place on the Turkish side. Nor was there any supply of coal at Rustchuk, Turtukai, or Silistria, and the only way in which the vessels could coal was by running down stream some hundreds of miles to Tchernavoda, from which place it took them nearly all the coal they carried to return to their stations on the upper waters of the Danube.

The entire control of all the movements of the ships was in the hands of the Sirdar Ekrem, the military Commander-in-chief, and the excuse was not valid which was afterwards made for him that he had no competent adviser; for Hobart Pasha happened to be on the spot at the outbreak of

the war, and not only detailed to him an excellent plan for the immediate occupation of all points that could be made available by the Russians for crossing the river, but urged on him the absolute necessity of immediately getting torpedoes, petroleum, and necessities for holding their own on the river. But the Sirdar Ekrem desired Hobart Pasha to understand that he—the Sirdar Ekrem—was Commander-in-chief of the ships on the Danube as well as of the armies ashore, and that he had no need of any advice.

We have seen in the previous chapter how very soon after the declaration of war the Russians were at Galatz and Brahilov, and how the bridge over the Sereth was left intact by the Turks. In a very few hours the Danube near that place was being thickly planted with torpedoes, and Hobart Pasha left in the *Rethymo*. In addition to placing torpedoes in the streams, the Russians also threw up batteries hurriedly on the banks, which are considerably higher than the river. When they were first built there were only field guns to put in them; and on one occasion when the Russians themselves challenged the Turkish gun-boats, a few rounds from the latter, though badly armed, soon caused the fire from the land to cease. Gradually the batteries increased in number and in the calibre of their guns, and the Russians also sent a large fleet of torpedo boats, which, in the absence of any vessels to stop them, began quietly cutting off the retreat of the Turkish fleet towards the lower Danube. In a few days the river was torpedoed at Kilia mouth, and the reach of the river above the bifurcation of the Kilia and Sulina. By these means the Russians succeeded in completely blockading the system of streams and passages between Brahilov and Hirsova, and detained as prisoners in those waters three Turkish gunboats. Among these was the *Luftigellil*, the destruction of which we have already described.

Thus the Turkish fleet on the Danube, which might easily have done so much to render the passage of the river by an invading force both difficult and dangerous, was reduced to total inactivity, and the following brief *resumé* fairly describes the whole of the naval operations on the river. The Russians, by means of the branches of the river passing through Roumanian territory, succeeded promptly, and for a long time effectually, in cutting off the retreat of the Turkish fleet. This, on the other hand,

remained paralyzed and inactive for want of coal and for want of direction. The Russians succeeded in blowing up, by means of a torpedo in a steam launch, one monitor. Another monitor was destroyed through the gross carelessness of the crew themselves. A few shots were exchanged at various parts of the river between earthworks and ships, without any result, and one vessel succeeded in frustrating a torpedo attack. In parts of the river a panic seemed to have seized the commanders of some of the gunboats that they were liable to be blown up, and they would open a tremendous fire of shot and shell on some peaceful Moldavians paddling along in their queer shaped canoes to look after their cattle in the marshes. Notwithstanding the apathy of the Turkish naval officials, no suspicion can fairly rest on the courage of the Turkish sailor. He is a man capable of the highest acts of heroism, and would follow a leader in whom he had confidence into any peril. He is, moreover, sober, honest, and respectful—three rare qualities anywhere—while the patience with which he submits to everything is wonderful. In point of discipline the fleet in the Danube was undoubtedly lax, and were it not for the qualities that distinguish the Turk of the lower orders, it would have been impossible to have maintained proper authority. There seems to be a kind of familiarity among the men and officers of Turkish ships that must be subversive of discipline. The ships themselves are often exceedingly dirty, and the disorder on board is appalling—guns cast loose, tackles lying about the deck, a musket propped up against the netting here, a cutlass there, pistols, boarding pikes, and tomahawks in all kinds of unexpected places, left anywhere by the last user, all extremely dirty and badly kept, and not numbered or apportioned to any one individual who should be held responsible for their condition, but seemingly general property. With this state of affairs, and the men, some in one dress, some in another, and all of them with holes in their clothes, with the officers in no way distinguished from the crew except by a stray shoulder strap or a gilt button, it was not surprising, perhaps, that there was not much enterprise among them.

Leaving the military and naval operations for the present, let us turn to the important events which had meanwhile taken place at Constantinople. The war so entirely threw the Turkish

Parliament into the background, that little or nothing was heard of it for some time. It gradually became known, however, that a tendency had developed in the Assembly to assert some right of control, and to a certain extent of direct interference in the course of affairs, particularly those connected with the war. Even before actual hostilities began, the tardiness of the Sirdar Ekrem, Abdul Kerim, to go to the seat of the war in Europe became the subject of remark and comment in the Assembly; and very soon after there were opportunities enough for animadverting, which were not lost. Directly or indirectly, complaints coming from the army reached the members of the Assembly, and gave them an excuse for exposing mismanagement and incapacity, and above all, the system of favouritism and nepotism which, despite all, flourished as rankly as ever. At the meeting of the Assembly on the 19th of May the deputy for Aidin demanded an explanation of the position and condition of the army in Asia Minor, and asked the reason why Redif Pasha, the Minister of War, who was apparently ignorant of the actual situation, did not go himself to the front to ascertain the facts. He denounced the system of keeping secret the movements of the troops, and complained that while the country was in danger the Chamber was called upon to discuss questions of minor importance. This speech met with applause, and several members essayed to speak in the same terms. The president, however, becoming nervous at the turn things were taking, cut short the debate.

The bombardment of Soukhoum Kaleh, and the rising of a part of the population of the environs against the Russians, were used as a means to raise the hopes in the capital to the wildest pitch. The war in Asia was in their imagination then almost at an end; for they had faith in the general insurrectionary movement in the Caucasus, and in the complete isolation of the Russian army in Armenia, where they thought famine would speedily annihilate whatever force the Ottoman sword might fail to overcome. Not only did the Government do nothing to moderate the ardour of these sanguine anticipations, but two "fetvas" (or decrees) of the Sheik-ul-Islam, the head of the Mahometan religion in Turkey, were published—the one proclaiming the Sultan *Ghazi*, or "Conqueror," the other justifying and hallowing the war against Russia. In the same sense the Sultan

addressed to his soldiers and seamen, his "well-beloved children," forming the expedition to Soukhoum Kaleh, a proclamation, in which he bade them "join their brethren in Circassia, and with God's aid rescue them from a tyrannous yoke, to restore the reign of justice, and vindicate the rights of the oppressed." The Ottoman banner, the Sultan declared, was the standard of Islam; and, quoting the Koran, he assured his people that "Paradise is under the shadow of the sabres," and that the warriors of the Crescent were sure of their reward, either in this world or in the other. Seven Ulemas were also sent by the Sheik-ul-Islam from Constantinople to the provinces, to preach and explain that the war with Russia was not a political but a religious one, since it aimed at exterminating Islam; and reminding that all those who fell defending their religion would be called "Ghazi," and martyrs for the faith.

In the fetva which related that every Ottoman was bound to fight to repel invasion the Moslem Pope laid down the religious duty of all the Christian bodies in the land, and attempted a stretch of authority which was naturally resented. Ultimately, in compliance with the remonstrances of Christian dignitaries, who pointed out that it was unpropitious to force Christians, by means of the conscription, to serve in an avowedly holy war of Islam, the Porte postponed the measure, and commenced to levy upon the Christians the usual money payment for release from military service.

The proclamation of the Jihad, or Holy War, by the Sheik-ul-Islam was at first regarded as a yielding to the popular voice, which had been growing louder and louder every day; for it was presumed that it would impose a direct obligation on the Sultan to place himself at the head of his army. Without such a proclamation, his doing so would have been deemed quite contrary to received notions and traditional custom. This departure of the Sultan from Constantinople, however, very naturally raised the question whether it was quite safe and advisable to leave behind him an Assembly which had assumed a rather independent attitude, which was becoming more and more difficult to manage, and which, moreover, had the whole population of the capital with it. The presence of the Sultan, and the strength derived from it by the Ministers, might be sufficient, as had hitherto been the case, to restrain the Assembly; but once the Sultan was gone,

those remaining to represent the Government might lose all control over it.

The proceedings of the Ottoman Parliament were characterized by much greater ability than might have been expected, considering the circumstances under which it was convened, and remembering also that it was the first Representative Assembly which had ever met in Turkey. Mr. Layard, the English ambassador, attended a sitting in May, and in narrating his experience in a despatch to Lord Derby, said, that at the time of his visit the Chamber was discussing a bill concerning municipal taxation; and he could state with confidence, and with some experience of the House of Commons, that he never saw a debate carried on with more order and propriety. Members could either speak from their seats or from a tribune, after the French fashion. With the exception of one individual, a Greek, they addressed the Speaker, or President, from their places. Their speeches were short, and to the point. Each article of the bill before them was discussed, explanations were demanded of the representatives of the department of the Government that had submitted the law to the Parliament, and were at once given. It was then put to the vote, and was passed without a division. Each deputy had a copy of the bill before him, and followed with the greatest interest and attention the discussion. He did not observe one exception; and he believed no public assembly of the kind in Europe could show a more respectable, intelligent, and dignified body of men. Christians and Mussulmans from all parts of the Empire, even an Arab with his half-Bedouin dress, were seated without distinction together. Among the Mahometans there were many Mollahs, or teachers of the Koran, in their white turbans. The Christian speakers, who predominated the day he was present, were listened to without any sign of impatience. They spoke with the most complete freedom, and without any restraint. The President rarely interfered, except to point out to a deputy that he was wandering from the question in debate. The President, Ahmet Vefyk Pasha, had been violently attacked in the English press for interfering with free discussion, and for arbitrarily and rudely interfering with the speakers; but from all that Mr. Layard learned from the deputies themselves, he believed this charge to have been an unjust one, and to have been made

at the instigation of those who had no wish that the Parliament should succeed. It must be borne in mind that this was the first attempt to bring together, in a popular assembly, men from all parts of the Empire, Mussulmans and Christians, who were entirely ignorant of the duties they had to perform, and of the way to perform them. Had they not been directed and controlled at first by a strong hand, there would have been general confusion, and the experiment would probably have failed. He knew no man in Turkey so competent to be their President as Ahmet Vefyk, from his knowledge, his honesty, and his determination and vigour of character. It was surprising, considering the materials with which he had to deal, that he succeeded so soon in bringing the House into an orderly and business-like assembly. For some months there had been no complaints, even on the part of those who had done their best to discredit the Turkish Parliament, that the President had unnecessarily interfered in its discussions, or had in any way restrained the perfect freedom of debate. If there was any cause of complaint it was perhaps in the opposite direction. That the Turkish deputies had shown remarkable independence and boldness in their discussions, had denounced misgovernment, and demanded the redress of grievances, was now generally admitted. They had not hesitated to attack powerful Ministers, and criticisms had even been made which indirectly affected the Sultan himself. They had insisted that a complete and honest budget of the national finances should be placed before them, and the Commission appointed to look into the public expenditure sent to the Ministries of War and Marine to demand a full statement and explanation of the contracts entered into by their departments. As the Turkish Parliament had shown these and other proofs of independence and national feeling, which would be called in other countries "patriotism," much might reasonably be hoped from it hereafter. It furnished one of those rare cases of a new institution working better than even its most sanguine advocates could have expected. He heard this admitted on all sides; and he ventured to express his opinion that, if the Turkish Empire was to be kept together, and if the interests and good government of its various populations, without distinction of creeds, were really aimed at, it should be the policy of England to employ what influence she might have

at the Porte to support and encourage this attempt at a national representation.

The fall of Ardahan, coming as it did only a few days after the news of the taking of Soukhoun Kaleh, and of the successful fight by the Turks near Batoum, was calculated to produce a strong reaction. The public feeling was chiefly directed against Mahmoud Damad Pasha, Redif Pasha, and Mukhtar Pasha, the Commander-in-chief in Asia. The first named was a marshal of the palace, and as the Sultan's brother-in-law possessed considerable influence over Abdul-Hamid. He was the main-spring of Midhat Pasha's fall, and afterwards took a prominent part in misruling Turkey. An old Turk of old Turks, he displayed the dogged obstinacy belonging to his race, showed little attention to the remonstrances of the new Parliament or to the popular outcry, but pursued his own designs without regard to any other opinion; although he never had any designs worth noticing, as he was a dull, heavy man, with no other views save that of retaining his power. Redif Pasha, the Minister of War, was the really strong mind of the palace party, and at this period was undoubtedly the most cordially detested and the best abused man in the Ottoman Empire. He was an upstart, and the epithets "harsh," "despotic," and "brutal," so often applied to him, were by no means undeserved. He it was who surrounded the Dolma Bagtschè Palace, and conveyed the unfortunate Abdul-Aziz to his prison at Top Capou in 1876. After the declaration of war his hostility to the employment of Europeans, and his contemptuous treatment of their suggestions, became more and more marked every day. He was unwilling to give even Hobart Pasha active employment, and he systematically disregarded all that officer's advice. "We are fighting for ourselves," he said, "and we do not want the interference of Poles or Hungarians, or Frenchmen or Englishmen, who only ask to be employed in order that they may serve some selfish purpose of their own. We are fighting for ourselves, and if we cannot save ourselves, we had better perish than be saved by their aid." His hostility to the views of Mr. Layard was also matter of public notoriety, and in one of his published despatches Mr. Layard does not hesitate to describe him as "that notoriously ignorant and corrupt minister."

Acting on the advice of the English ambassador, the Sultan promised to grant an amnesty to those

implicated in the Bulgarian insurrection, but Redif Pasha prevented its being carried into effect. In an interview with the Sultan Mr. Layard dwelt upon the disappointment which would be felt by her Majesty's Government if the amnesty were withheld, and his Majesty replied that before the war broke out he had determined to grant a general amnesty to the Bulgarians concerned in the events of the previous year. But now that he was engaged in hostilities with Russia, how could he set at liberty, and allow to return to their homes, a number of men who were known to be Russian agents, and who would avail themselves of their freedom to incite the Bulgarian population to rebel against his authority? That they would do so no one could doubt. There would be fresh murders of Mussulmans and fresh acts of retaliation. "Mr. Gladstone," his Majesty said, "would find new materials for denouncing the Turks and their rule, and for rousing the indignation of the English against them." He could not be fairly asked, he added, to permit conspirators against his throne, and persons guilty of grave crimes, for which they had been justly condemned, to go freely abroad. He was ready, as soon as the war was over, to grant a full and complete amnesty, but he could not promise to do so before.

Upon this Mr. Layard admitted that "no one could expect his Majesty to release dangerous men unconditionally;" and that, if there were any such among those who were imprisoned, he saw no objection to placing them under proper surveillance. But the great majority of those still in confinement were, he was assured, either innocent men or were charged with insignificant political offences, and from them no danger was to be apprehended. The Sultan, after arguing the question for some time with great calmness and intelligence, asked Mr. Layard whether he would consent that, if he granted an amnesty, some exceptions should be made with respect to persons who had been proved guilty of grave crimes, and to those whose unconditional release would be really dangerous to public peace and order. Mr. Layard replied, that he could not in justice ask that such men as his Majesty described should be set at liberty without some precautions being adopted with regard to them. He ventured to suggest that he should name a confidential agent who would come to an understanding with those charged with putting the amnesty into execution,

as to the persons who might be excepted from it, or ought for the public safety to be placed under "surveillance" if released. The Sultan answered that he was willing to agree to this proposal, and he gave his royal word that upon these conditions he would at once grant the amnesty. He was not quite certain, he said, that the step he was about to take was free from danger; but he would run the risk in order to show his deference to the wishes of the Queen and of her Majesty's Government, to whom he owed so much, and who had given him so many proofs of friendship, and because he was anxious to satisfy Mr. Layard. The latter then proposed that he should name Mr. Blunt, who was known to the Sultan by reputation, and whose impartiality could not be doubted, to communicate with the persons appointed to carry out the amnesty. To this suggestion the Sultan at once agreed, but it was not carried out. It would, in fact, appear that in this matter the Sultan was Sultan only in name, and that his good will and pledged word, even when sustained by the earnest representations of the British ambassador, were powerless against the ill-will of a minister, whose sole recommendation was that he had contributed largely to the dethronement of one Sultan, and was supposed to be capable of dethroning another.

The secret of the power of Mahmoud Damad and Redif Pasha lay in their union, their influence on his Majesty's mind, and on their having the resources of the whole Empire at their disposal. In spite of the jealous care with which they watched the Sultan, however, they could not altogether prevent information as to the state of public feeling reaching him, especially as among the Ministers themselves there were some who shared this feeling. Nor, indeed, had these representations and expostulations conveyed to the Sultan remained without effect; but the influence of those nearest him always counteracted its influence, for they sought to work on his fears and to rouse his suspicion by representing all opposition to the ruling clique as directed against his person. Above all, the name of Midhat Pasha was held up as a sort of bug-bear, as that of a man who wished to reduce the Sultan to a state of tutelage, in order to wield dictatorial power. On the other hand, everything was done to represent matters connected with the war as favourably as possible.

In the circumstances we have described, it was

obvious that either the chief Ministers of the Sultan or the people must yield ; and for a time Redif Pasha and Mahmoud Damad were triumphant, owing to the following circumstances. On Thursday, May 24, emboldened by the disasters which had befallen the Turkish arms in Asia, and which had increased the unpopularity of Redif Pasha, some 300 young students, or Softas, chiefly from Asia Minor, came before the building in which the Turkish Parliament assembled, and asked to be admitted. They stated that they wished to ask why Ardahan had been allowed to fall into the hands of the Russians, and to demand the immediate dismissal of Redif Pasha, the Minister of War, and of Mahmoud Damad Pasha, the Sultan's brother-in-law, to whom they attributed the disaster. They were refused admittance, and the President of the Chamber, Ahmet Vefyk Pasha, was informed of what was taking place. He immediately suspended the sitting, and going out to the students, asked them what they wanted. They replied that they desired to state their grievances to the Chamber. The President told them that this was impossible, as it was against the Constitution ; but if they chose to name one or two of their number to represent them they should see some of the Deputies, although they could not be admitted to a sitting of the Chamber. They then elected four youths to represent them, who were introduced into the hall where some of the Deputies had assembled. Their spokesman, a boy of between seventeen and eighteen years of age, was a native of Ardahan. He stated that he had left his father and mother there, and that they had fallen into the hands of the Russians. The surrender of the city and the advance of the Russians he attributed to the treachery or incapacity of the Ministers, upon whose instant dismissal his fellow-students insisted. The President answered that the Softas had no right to present themselves as they had done before the Chambers, when they had, with the rest of the country, their constitutional representatives through whom they could state their grievances. He said that he should communicate their complaints to the Government, and he requested them to invite their fellow-students to disperse, which they immediately did, giving cheers for the Sultan and the President of the Chamber.

The news was at once communicated to the Porte, and the Grand Vizir and Redif Pasha

immediately obtained an interview with the Sultan. Now for several days Redif Pasha's hold on his Majesty's favour had been growing weaker and weaker. When the Sultan questioned him respecting the fall of Ardahan, he had the hardihood to tell him that the place was one of no consequence ; whereupon the Sultan angrily reminded him that only fifteen days previously he had declared Ardahan to be a place of great consequence and great strength, and fully capable of long defence. Redif had also many enemies who were exerting themselves against him, and it is highly probable that he would have fallen without much delay. But the irregular and unconstitutional action of the Softas at once gave Redif Pasha command of the situation. He had no difficulty in persuading the Sultan that, if he were to yield to the demand, he would establish a dangerous and possibly a fatal precedent. Had Abdul-Hamid possessed his grandfather's temper and courage he would probably have banished Redif for his unpopularity, and punished the Softas for their impertinence ; but Abdul-Hamid did not inherit his grandfather's sense or fortitude, and he at once made up his mind to support the man who alone, he thought, could save him. The other ministers were summoned by telegraph, and a Council was held in the Sultan's presence, which lasted far into the night. An aide-de-camp was sent to Ahmet Vefyk to summon him to the Sultan. He refused to attend, saying that he was busy, but that he would wait upon the Sultan in the evening. When the aide-de-camp had left him he turned to some friends who were present and said—"It is high time for them to summon me to the palace. They should have done that fifteen years ago, and I might then have saved the country." Meanwhile the Council had decided to proclaim a state of siege. Sufficient troops were ordered out to repress any popular outbreak, and several members of the party of Midhat Pasha were immediately arrested and taken to the Seraskierat. This desperate effort to crush the party of Midhat Pasha was partly due to an eloquent article in his praise which had recently appeared in the *Journal des Debats*, and which caused much irritation at the palace, where he was feared as much as he was hated.

The first thing the Porte did after the demonstration by the Softas, was to send round at once to the local papers to tell them that the official view,

and consequently the view the press ought to take, was that it was not a demonstration at all; that it was only a visit accidentally made by four persons belonging to Ardahan, and who happened to be Softas, and bethought them of going to the Chamber to get information as to what had occurred in their country; and that these four persons had accidentally become the nucleus of a fortuitous concurrence of atoms wearing white and green turbans, the head-dress of students, professors, and lawyers. Before even the newspapers—which had already published their editions of that day—could make use of these instructions, the authorities had taken another view of the affair, and saw that it was much more reasonable to treat the matter as being more serious, it being no secret that the real motive of the demonstration was the dismissal of Redif Pasha—which the Softas well knew had been already recommended more than once by the British ambassador—and also Mahmoud Damad Pasha, if not the reversal of the policy of the whole of the administration, and the recall of Midhat Pasha, whose name was audibly pronounced by some of the crowd. Redif Pasha and Mahmoud Pasha represented the matter to the Sultan as being of such extreme gravity, that they could not be responsible for the consequences unless they were armed with sufficient power for controlling popular movements, which, though they had been made use of to put him on the throne, might also be employed to dispossess him of it. Hence, while it was for a short time everywhere current that Redif, to the universal satisfaction of the public, native and foreign, had been dismissed, the official paper was printing what is called a *teskéré*—that is to say, official communication—to Redif Pasha himself, delegating to him, in virtue of a so-called *iradé* (Imperial decree), full jurisdiction over the capital.

Under the state of siege, the duties of the civil authority devolved in great part upon the military. Any person disturbing the peace, or suspected of a design to do so, could be forthwith summoned before a Council of War at the Seraskierat. Persons found guilty were liable, according to the gravity of the offence, to be summarily executed, or condemned to penal servitude, or simple detention in any of the Turkish fortresses. In case of need, domiciliary visits could be made in any house at any hour of the day or night; powder and

arms could be seized; suspected persons not Turkish subjects, nor belonging to the country, could be summarily removed. All public meetings of whatever kind were forbidden, and any newspaper or other periodical publishing articles considered detrimental to the public peace could be forthwith suppressed. The Bureau de la Presse also strictly interdicted the publication in the local journals of any war news which was not furnished by the Government; and as at this time they chiefly received bad news, they communicated scarcely anything. This, however, was not all. Redif Pasha not only endeavoured to prevent the publication of bad news, he wished also to dam up the sources from which bad news came. For that purpose the Porte, notwithstanding a strong preliminary remonstrance from the French Embassy, determined to deprive the Embassies of the privilege which they enjoyed, of corresponding by telegraph in cypher with their consuls throughout the Empire. The telegrams which the British and Austrian ambassadors had received from the British and Austrian consuls at Erzeroum and other towns, and which had been communicated to the Sultan, had so enraged Redif Pasha and Mahmoud Damad that they determined to take away from the ambassadors the power of making themselves at once useful to the Sultan and dangerous to his bad advisers. Colonel Dr. Temple (Temple Bey), a relative of the Bishop of Exeter, was deported to Batoum for having communicated to the Sultan (with whom he was in very frequent communication) some unfavourable news from the seats of war. He was not only an officer of an artillery regiment, but was at the same time—and had been for years before a military grade was conferred upon him—on the medical staff of the palace, and private physician to Prince Reshid Effendi, heir to the throne. At the commencement of the war, when his regiment received orders to take active service, the Sultan retained him at the palace, and his Majesty's wish that he should not be sent away was signified by letter to the Minister of War. Under these circumstances, it was certainly difficult to believe that the heir to the throne had been so suddenly, and without his knowledge, deprived of the services of his medical attendant, solely out of anxiety that every military medical officer, whatever his other avocations, should be at his post in the field or the hospital. The Bey, on receiving the order at the Seraskierat, whither he had been

summoned without any intimation of what he was wanted for, was threatened with a court-martial if he went to his duty to the palace, instead of going direct on board the steamer. He was only allowed to take leave of his family on giving his word of honour that he would obey this order.

Soon after these events the German ambassador at Constantinople, with a view to ascertain the direction of the popular feeling, intimated to the Turkish Foreign Minister that he and his colleague at St. Petersburg had received instructions from their Government to offer the mediation of Germany in case either of the belligerents should desire peace. For a time it seemed probable that Turkey would accept the hand thus held out to her; but the campaigns in Asia and on the Danube did not make any visible progress, and rumours of success came from Montenegro. The Sultan then felt that the time when he might ask for peace had not arrived, and he declared publicly that neither he nor his people would consent to sign a treaty of peace until the Ottoman cause, the justice of which was so universally recognized, had triumphed.

About the same time Mr. Layard strongly urged on the English Government the desirability of endeavouring to bring about peace. In a very important despatch on the general situation of affairs, dated 30th May, he informed Lord Derby that since his arrival in Constantinople his main object had been to prepare the way for peace. He thought that in doing so he should best carry out the wishes and intentions of her Majesty's Government. He had that end in view when he induced the Porte to appeal to the Powers for their mediation under the eighth Article of the Treaty of Paris. He had little hope that war could be averted by that step, but it appeared to him that it might afford an opening for the interference of those Powers in the interests of peace on some future occasion. The despatch then proceeds:—

“The opening of the war has not been quite so favourable to Russia as she appears to have expected. The extraordinary rise in the Danube has checked her advance on the side of Europe, and has enabled Turkey to increase her means of resistance. Although the Porte might, no doubt, have done more in this respect, there is no doubt that the difficulties of the Russian campaign in Roumelia have been much increased by the delay; and although Russia may succeed in the end, it will probably be at a greater sacrifice than she may

have at first contemplated. The simultaneous attack on the European and Asiatic territories of Turkey has not, therefore, led to all the results upon which Russia apparently counted.

“According to information derived from various sources, it would appear that the rise in the waters of the Danube, and the consequent floods over the surrounding country, will render its passage very difficult, if not impossible, for three or four weeks to come. Does not this delay afford an opening for another effort in the interests of peace? The position of affairs is this: Russia has succeeded in Asia, and thus she holds a material guarantee for what she may require on behalf of the Christians of Turkey in the shape of a province; in Europe she cannot be said to have yet succeeded, and she will probably have to encounter a desperate resistance, and to make vast sacrifices, before she can impose her own terms upon the Porte. Moreover, the longer the war lasts, the greater the risk of drawing other Powers into it against her.

“If hostilities be prolonged, Turkey, in her despair, may have recourse to measures to embarrass and injure Russia, which may to a certain extent effect that object. Although the rising in the Caucasus may not have the importance that has been attributed to it, and the negotiations between the Porte and revolutionary and national leaders may not lead to serious results, they are undoubtedly a danger to Russia.

“The real intentions of Russia would also be brought to a test by proposing to her, at this moment, a mediation. If her real object is, as she asserts, the improvement of the condition of the Christian populations, she has surely now the means of obtaining a satisfactory guarantee for it. The Turkish Government, it must be admitted, has already done a good deal in the direction pointed out by the Powers at the Conferences and in the Protocol of London. It is prepared to do more, and would do more, if the war waged against Turkey by Russia permitted it. The lesson which the Porte has received has, no doubt, made it see the absolute necessity of complying with the demands of Europe, without even the material guarantee which Russia may require.

“If, on the other hand, Russia has the ambitious designs generally attributed to her, and has entered upon this war for the purposes of territorial aggrandizement, her professions of humanity and disinterestedness can now be gauged; and her Majesty's

Government will be able, at least, to judge what her real objects and intentions are, and how far the interests of the British Empire may be affected or endangered by them.

"It must not, however, be inferred that the Porte will be so easily induced to make peace, even were it in extreme peril. There are some Turkish statesmen who see the dangers which threaten their country, and who would feel the absolute necessity of bringing the war to an end almost at any sacrifice. It is scarcely necessary to specify the arguments that would weigh with them—the hopelessness of looking to England or any other Power for help; the utter want of money to carry on the struggle, the inferiority of the Turkish armies to those of Russia, and the imminent risk of the dismemberment of the Empire. But it must not be forgotten that there are other Turkish statesmen, supported by no inconsiderable party, and relying especially upon the popular religious feeling, or "fanaticism," as it is called in the case of Mussulmans, who are prepared to run all these dangers and risks, and who think that—by persisting to the very last in a life and death struggle with the enemy of their race and faith, by appealing to the whole Mahometan world for support, and by counting upon the interests and fears of the other European Powers, who at the last moment will, they are convinced, place themselves on the side of Turkey—she will, in the end, not only prevail against Russia, but be enabled to assert for herself an independence of foreign interference and control of which her submission to Europe has hitherto deprived her.

"It will be necessary to bear these considerations in view should the Powers decide upon making any attempt to induce Russia to listen to an offer of mediation, and especially if they are called upon to propose terms of peace. Whilst Russia might desire to exact much, no Turkish ministers could accept very hard or humiliating conditions without risking their own lives, and even that of the Sultan, and without exposing the Christian populations to a massacre.

"I may be excused for pointing out the dangers to England of a prolongation of the war, and of a complete subjugation of a large part of the Empire by Russia. Should Russia desire to annex at this time any of the European provinces of Turkey, European interests would probably be called into play, and she would be prevented from carrying

out her intentions. The influence, however, which she would inevitably establish over these populations would be almost tantamount to absolute possession, and would enable her to annex them, sooner or later, when she could do so with impunity; but as regards the acquisition by her of territory in Asia Minor the case is different. The interests of England would then be alone concerned. It would probably signify little to the rest of Europe whether Russia retained Armenia or not. But England has to consider the effect of the annexation to Russia of this important province upon the British possessions in India. Russia would then command the whole of Asia Minor and the great valley of the Euphrates and Tigris, which would inevitably fall into her hands in the course of time.

"Persia, moreover, would be placed entirely at her mercy. The suspicion that Russia has already made secret offers to Persia to assist her in acquiring the province of Bagdad in exchange for Ghilan and Mazanderan may be unfounded; but the fact that it exists, and has been entertained by persons not generally ill informed, proves that this consideration is one not to be altogether lost sight of. In most cases, when the evident interests of two parties are concerned in effecting an exchange, the exchange is sooner or later effected. The desire of Persia to possess the province of Bagdad and the holy shrines of their prophets and martyrs is of very ancient date, and is shared by the whole Persian nation. On the other hand, the possession of the entire coast of the Caspian Sea, and the direct road through a rich and well-inhabited country to Herat and Afghanistan, and ultimately to India, is a matter of vast political importance to Russia. Such being the case, there is every reason to believe that when Persia finds that the Turkish Empire is threatened with dismemberment, her own interests will get the better of any sympathy for it founded upon community of faith, and that, completely under the control of Russia, she will not be indisposed to agree to an arrangement which would be acceptable to the religious feelings and to the ambition of the Persian people. The possession by Persia of the province of Bagdad would be, as far as England is concerned, its possession by Russia.

"It must not be forgotten that the possession of Armenia by Russia as regards any designs that

she may have upon India, supposing her to entertain them, would be very different from that of any part of Turkestan or Central Asia. In Armenia and the north of Persia she would have a hardy and abundant population, affording her excellent materials for a large army, ready at any time to advance upon our Indian frontier, and resting upon a convenient and sure base of operations, in direct communication, by the Caspian Sea and by Batoum, with the heart of the Russian Empire.

"The moral effect of the conquest of Armenia and the annexation of Ghilan and Mazanderan by Russia upon our Mahometan subjects, and upon the populations of Central Asia, cannot be overlooked by a statesman who attaches any value to the retention of India as part of the British Empire.

"The great calamities which the prolongation of the war may entail upon the various populations of this country, Mussulman and non-Mussulman, and the vast importance to the interests of humanity in bringing it to a speedy end, may be briefly mentioned. It is scarcely necessary to refer to the terrible loss of life and desolation which such a war must occasion. If the slaughter of thousands and tens of thousands of Turks is to be justified, even those who profess to be the most humane of men may feel some pity for their innocent women and children, who will be left to perish in utter misery. But the Christians may suffer scarcely less than the Mahometans; their houses will be rendered desolate; their lives and property will be sacrificed to Turkish fanaticism, or to the disorder and anarchy which the prolongation of the war will cause.

"Another motive for desiring peace before Russia can completely crush Turkey, and dictate her own terms, is the repugnance unquestionably felt by the most enlightened and intelligent Christians of all denominations, to being placed under Russian rule or protection, or even under her predominant influence. I have given your Lordship evidence of this fact, which I believe to be indisputable. It is shown by the encyclical of the Greek Patriarch, transmitted to your Lordship by to-day's messenger. It is further confirmed by the remarkable statement of Dr. Washburne, whose impartiality cannot be doubted, and who is certainly no advocate of Turkish misrule, that of the many hundred Bulgarians who have received an American (equivalent to an English) education at Robert

College, not one was implicated in the attempted insurrection in Bulgaria.

"The Christian population of Turkey, or rather, it may perhaps be said, those who by their knowledge and intelligence are capable of representing them, are convinced that under the Turkish rule they have a far better chance of carrying out their national aspirations, of retaining their national faith, and developing their political freedom, than under that of Russia. They believe that the pressure recently brought to bear upon the Porte by the European Powers, and the lesson which the Turkish Government has received, will contribute to these objects. They are encouraged by the unexpected success of a Turkish Parliament, in which they find that they can freely express their opinions and expose their grievances. They know that the unchecked success of Russia would at once lead to the destruction of this germ of future liberty and good government. I believe that they are right.

"What I have ventured to write in this despatch is, I can assure your Lordship, founded upon no preconceived ideas with regard to this country, but upon the information that I have obtained in free and unrestrained conversation with men of all classes, conditions, and religions. Not a day has passed since I have been here that I have not seen many such persons. Some have come to me of their own accord; others, who may have believed that their views would not be palatable to me, and have kept away, I have invited to call upon me."

This despatch reached the Foreign Office on June 9, but there is no trace in the Blue Book in which it is published of any action on the part of the Government with respect to it. By the time it was received the Russian reverses in Asia Minor had commenced, and the position of affairs had thus become somewhat altered.

Meanwhile, the Turkish Government was put to very great straits to find money, and on June 6 the Minister of Finance informed the Chamber of Deputies that the Government must have a grant of 5,000,000 Turkish pounds, all attempts to borrow money abroad having failed. So long before as April, 1876, Sir Henry Elliot informed the Foreign Office that the Porte was struggling with "the crushing weight of a floating debt of £18,000,000 sterling, upon a portion of which they were paying 30 per cent."

A very interesting discussion on the subject of this forced loan took place in the Chamber of Deputies. One or two of the speakers (Mussulmans) spoke with unusual boldness of the utter impossibility of the country being able to bear further taxation; it being already overwhelmed with debt, and unable to bear the burdens already weighing it down to the ground. One speaker commented on the selfishness of the pashas and beys ("the rich Government class"), who had done nothing to aid the country in its present difficulties "beyond making presents of a few horses" (a few days before a notice had been issued that all horses belonging to private individuals would be required for the service of the State), while the poor were brought to utter ruin by overwhelming and ever-increasing taxation. These remarks were well received, and for some time the noise and disorder in the Chamber were considerable—especially for an Oriental audience. After some further discussion, and an attempt to smooth matters had been made by other speakers, the debate was postponed to another day; the result being that the forced loan was decided on, the Government having intimated that it must have the 5,000,000 pounds without delay, to enable it to carry on the war. In spite of all protests, therefore, it was decided to issue a loan for the sum mentioned—that is, 5,000,000 liras in paper at an interest of 10 per cent., with a five per cent. sinking fund. In addition to this, the money in the chest of the religious department for widows and orphans was borrowed to meet the necessities of the war.

The military preparations were at the same time pressed forward in the city. Previously, Constantinople had enjoyed the privilege of immunity from conscription, neither had the Mahometan residents been called upon to serve nor the non-Mussulmans to pay the *Bedel Askerieh*, or exemption tax; but the new law on the conscription already referred to abolished these privileges. Camel-drivers and other Turks of Asia Minor were also brought to Constantinople, and after they had got rid of their wild, not to say savage dress and weapons, were put through a short military drill and sent to the front. The fortifications of the capital were also pushed on with something more than the usual speed generally

observable in Turkish undertakings, and every morning gangs of workmen—nearly all of them non-Mussulmans—accompanied by engineer officers, were to be seen leaving for the works.

Some idea of the interior of the city at this time may be obtained from the following extracts from the diary of a lady-resident. "It is scarcely possible for a European," she says, "to conceive the distress which prevails among the Mahometan population of the Turkish capital, or the noble patriotism with which it is borne. All the able-bodied men are sent away to serve as soldiers without pay, and their wives have to support themselves and their families on a daily wage of two piastres, which is the current rate of women's wages, while the price of bread is now four piastres the oke (about 3 lbs.) Among the higher classes, too, many families used to live entirely on the dividends of Turkish stock; the incomes derived from this source by inhabitants of Constantinople alone amounted to about £4,000,000. These families are now entirely ruined, and others, though not absolutely destitute, have suffered immense losses. People go about from bank to bank with coupons of the nominal value of several hundreds of pounds, and can nowhere get cash for them. There are also in Constantinople some 25,000 officials, most of them with families; their united salaries amount to about £2,000,000, and they have not received any pay at all since the beginning of the war, not even in paper money, on which there is a loss of 80 per cent. The ministers, too, have volunteered to give up a fourth of their salaries; but this is a mere formality, for their salaries are not paid. All employment on public and private buildings has ceased, and it is almost incomprehensible how the lower classes contrive to obtain the means of existence. Such a state of things in any other European capital would long ago have led to disturbances and riots; in Constantinople the only result seems to be an increase in the number of beggars, of suicides, and of deaths from exhaustion. As to the troops, they go to battle with a cheerfulness and enthusiasm which excites universal admiration. *Safvet Pasha*, replying to a foreign officer who was praising their reckless bravery in action, said, '*C'est par- ceque chaque soldat porte le paradis sur son fusil.*'"

CHAPTER XX.

Differences of opinion in England on the Eastern Question—Important Speech by Lord Beaconsfield—Description of the views held by the two Parties—Serious fears of a War with Russia—"A Cabinet of Compromise"—Mr. Gladstone gives notice of Five Resolutions in the House of Commons—His objection to Russia being regarded as the only friend of the Christians in Turkey—Scene in the House of Commons at the commencement of the Debate—Mr. Gladstone's Speech—Charges the Government with having carried out an ambiguous Policy—Lord Salisbury's efforts at the Conference frustrated, and the Conference a Farce—Declarations of Members of the Government—Uselessness of remonstrating with Turkey—"British Interests"—Lord Derby's Despatch on the Bulgarian Massacres, and its Results—The Authors of the Massacres still unpunished—No real Improvement in Turkey in the preceding quarter of a century—The aims of Russia facilitated by the Policy of the Government—United European action the only way to close the Eastern Question—The results of the Crimean War as regards the Christians in Turkey—Increased responsibilities of England in consequence—The Cause of the Revolted Subjects of Turkey a Holy Cause—Their Petition to the People of England—A Great and Noble Prize—Amendment to Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions—Important Speech of Mr. Cross, Home Secretary—Protest against endeavouring to Separate one Member of the Cabinet from another—Were Mr. Gladstone and his Friends prepared to go to War?—Feeling of the United Cabinet with respect to the acts of the Turkish Government—The Basis of the Conference not to interfere with the Independence or Integrity of Turkey—Lord Salisbury's Instructions—The two distinct Landmarks of the Government Policy—Lord Salisbury's last words at the Conference—Attitude of Russia the Obstacle to Pacification and Reform in Turkey—The foolishness of Turkey in rejecting the Protocol—Russia not acting on behalf of Europe—Clear statement of "British Interests," and of the Policy of the Government—Speech of Mr. Childers—Mr. Cross's Statements a great gain—Mr. Roebuck's opinion as to the great importance of the Debate—Condemnation of Mr. Gladstone's proceedings, and approval of the conduct of the Government—Speech of Mr. Lowe—England's duty to wash her hands of Turkey—The Three Policies of the Government—Lord Derby's Despatch of 1st May a direct insult to Russia—Reply of Lord John Manners to Mr. Lowe—Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions could have no meaning but War—Speech of Sir Robert Peel—Disapproval of Mr. Gladstone's proceedings—Severe condemnation of Russia—The Government entitled to the Thanks of the House and the Gratitude of the Country—Mr. Forster's reasons for supporting the Resolutions—Turkish claims on England forfeited—The two Schools of Opinion on the Eastern Question—England's Duty—Speech of Mr. Bourke, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—All the European Powers against Coercion except Russia—Mr. Goschen's approval of the Home Secretary's Speech—The Independence and Integrity of the Ottoman Empire no longer claimed as a "British Interest"—Change in the Traditional Policy of England—Satisfaction at the Home Secretary's Declaration of Neutrality—Speech of Sir W. Harcourt—The dangers of Russia having been left to deal alone with Turkey—Isolation of the English Government from the other European Powers—Lord Hartington's opinion of the Amendment and Resolutions—Criticism of the Proceedings of the Government—Mr. Gladstone's objects—Autonomy for the Revolted Provinces of Turkey not an idle dream—The opportunity lost for united action by the European Powers—The true strength of England at home and abroad—Speech of Sir Stafford Northcote, Chancellor of the Exchequer—The Government Policy distinct and clear—Their Intentions in the Future—Defence of Lord Derby's Despatch—The difficulties of acting with other Powers—Reply of Mr. Gladstone—Scene in the House—Effect of Lord Derby's Despatch in Turkey—The dualism of the Government Policy—Coercion did not mean War—The danger of Turkey and Russia coming to Terms of Peace regardless of the rest of Europe—Division on the Resolutions—Great Ministerial Triumph—"British Interests" in the House of Lords—Important Speech of Lord Salisbury—His advice to use Large Maps—Another Speech of Lord Salisbury on the same subject—Direct and Indirect Interests—Madness of going to War against a Nightmare—The proper course for England to pursue—Speech of Lord Derby, Foreign Secretary—The Interests of Peace the Greatest of all British Interests.

In a celebrated speech at Aylesbury, on September 20, 1876, the Prime Minister, Lord Beaconsfield, frankly admitted that the policy of the British Government on the Eastern Question was then unpopular. A despatch of the Foreign Secretary (Lord Derby) to the Porte on the 21st of the same month—the substance of which is given on page 250, and which was probably the most peremptory message ever sent by England to any friendly state—clearly showed that the Ministry had become convinced of the reality of grievances which had once been doubted. From that time the tide of public opinion in England underwent a change, and the appointment of Lord Salisbury as special representative to the Constantinople Conference met with universal approval. At the Lord Mayor's

Banquet, on November 9, the Premier made another memorable speech—laying much stress on the Treaty of Paris, blaming Russia for rejecting the offer of a six months' armistice, and concluding as follows:—We have nothing to gain by war. We are essentially a non-aggressive power. There are no cities and no provinces that we desire to appropriate. We have built up an empire of which we are proud, and our proudest boast is this—that that empire exists as much upon sympathy as upon force. But if the struggle comes it should also be recollected that there is no country so prepared for war as England—because there is no country whose resources are so great. In a righteous cause—and I trust that England will never embark in war except in a righteous

cause; a cause that concerns her liberty, her independence, or her empire—England is not a country that will have to inquire whether she can enter into a second or third campaign. In a righteous cause England will commence a fight that will not end till the right is done.

This speech naturally created great alarm—more especially as a few days afterwards it became known that a despatch from the English ambassador at St. Petersburg—describing his interview with the Czar, to which we have alluded on page 254, and at which his Majesty made such earnestly pacific assurances—had reached England before the delivery of the speech at the Guildhall.

Under these circumstances the adherents of the anti-Turkish policy convened a conference on the Eastern Question at St. James' Hall on December 8. With this exception, however, so long as any chance remained of preserving peace, no active demonstrations were made in England by those who felt most hostile to Turkey and disapproved generally of the proceedings of the Government; but it was, of course, evident that after the declaration of war such reticence would not be preserved.

The difference of opinion which existed in the country may be thus briefly and impartially described. On the one side was Mr. Gladstone, the late premier, supported by the bulk of the Liberal party in the House of Commons, but most earnestly by the advanced section of it, whilst on the other side were ranged the whole Conservative party, with one or two exceptions, and a few Liberals.

The former—or Liberal party—held, generally, that the origin of the disturbances which had resulted in a war that might possibly convulse all Europe was in Bosnia and Bulgaria; that it was caused by an intolerably brutal government in those regions; that Russia, Germany, Austria, Italy, and France had, and from the first had had, one aim in view, one common business in hand, namely, to restore peace to the world by satisfying the demands of humanity and redressing its wrongs in European Turkey. They further held that, if the English Government had been wiser and less suspicious, the common aim would long since have been achieved and the common wish accomplished; and that they, therefore, were so far responsible for the war that had at last broken out, to the disappointment of all the other govern-

ments in Europe. This party was also resolved, that under no circumstances would they again support Turkish administration of European Christian Provinces—and a few would unquestionably have been willing to have intervened by force to render such a thing impossible; but no member of the party ever suggested that it was in itself a good thing to extend Russian territory. Their argument was exactly the reverse—that the most effectual way to curb Russia was to support the creation of new States in the country which she coveted, and, when created, to declare them neutral territory, which she could not pass without risk of war with England, and with such allies as might join her. With regard to the phrase so often repeated on the other side, of the protection of "British interests," they contended that the cause of the oppressed Provinces in Turkey was the cause of liberty, humanity, and civilization at large; and that the nation which set its own immediate interests in opposition to the wider interests of mankind would "out-wit itself," and be a loser in the long run.

The other, or Conservative side, denied that the risings in Bosnia, in Herzegovina, and in Bulgaria, were spontaneous, while admitting that the condition of these provinces was bad enough to account for rebellion. They believed, on what they considered good evidence, that those insurrections were "got up;" and that they were not got up for the purpose of obtaining for those provinces better forms of local administration. They saw in the Servian war, and in Russia's "unofficial" part in it, strong evidence of the truth of their view, and more in the whole course of Russian procedure, diplomatic and military alike. And when they turned to the conduct of other nations, they saw nothing in it to warrant the confident assumption that they were all anxious for peace, and solicitous only to satisfy natural Slavonic sympathies and repress certain elements of disorder in South-eastern Europe. On the contrary, they believed that in quarters where wish and will were very powerful there was no desire that war should be averted, and no real effort to insure peace; but rather a wish that the cloud should break in storm when once it was fully gathered, seeing that matters of far more importance to them than Bulgarian wrongs might then be pushed to final settlement.

England generally was undoubtedly agreed as

to the paramount importance of herself keeping out of war if possible; but it was seriously feared by Mr. Gladstone and his adherents that, under cover of the elastic phrase "British interests," a war might be commenced; and it is undeniable that an apprehension—almost an expectation—prevailed everywhere in the later days of April and in the early days of May, 1877, of an immediate rupture with Russia. No man could speak to his neighbour, in London or in the remotest corners of the country, without being made aware of it. It was a most feverish expectation, with a strong element of bitterness in it; and exactly one of those states of feeling which tends to bring on that which it looks forward to. Most warlike articles appeared in the anti-Russian newspapers, and one influential journal, which professed almost ostentatiously to be behind the scenes, in an article headed "A Cabinet of Compromise," told the nation that the Cabinet comprised two Governments, and declared, with no little asperity, that the great body of Englishmen would insist on knowing whether they were to be governed by Lords Beaconsfield and Derby, or by Lords Salisbury and Carnarvon. What the policy of the Beaconsfield-Derby section of the Cabinet at this time was presumed to be there was not much difficulty in conjecturing; although, judging from his speech given at the end of this chapter, the presumption was incorrect so far, at all events, as Lord Derby was concerned.

In the midst of this excited state of feeling Mr. Gladstone, on Monday, April 30, gave notice in the House of Commons, that on going into Committee of Supply on the following Friday he should move the following resolutions:—

"1. That this House finds just cause of dissatisfaction and complaint in the conduct of the Ottoman Porte, with regard to the despatch written by the Earl of Derby on the 21st day of September, 1876, and relating to the massacres in Bulgaria.

"2. That until such conduct shall have been essentially changed, and guarantees on behalf of the subject populations, other than the promises or ostensible measures of the Porte, shall have been provided, that Government will be deemed by this House to have lost all claim to receive either the material or the moral support of the British Crown.

"3. That in the midst of the complications which exist, and the war which has actually begun,

this House earnestly desires the influence of the British Crown in the counsels of Europe to be employed with a view to the early and effectual development of local liberty and practical self-government in the disturbed provinces of Turkey, by putting an end to the oppression which they now suffer, without the imposition upon them of any other foreign dominion.

"4. That bearing in mind the wise and honourable policy of this country in the Protocol of April, 1826, and the Treaty of July, 1827, with respect to Greece, this House furthermore earnestly desires that the influence of the British Crown may be addressed to promoting the concert of the European Powers, in exacting from the Ottoman Porte, by their united authority, such changes in the government of Turkey as they may deem to be necessary for the purposes of humanity and justice, for effectual defence against intrigue, and for the peace of the world.

"5. That an humble address, setting forth the prayer of this House according to the tenor of the foregoing resolutions, be prepared and presented to her Majesty."

In explanation of the time and manner of bringing forward his motion, Mr. Gladstone stated that it was done solely on his own responsibility, and not as the organ of any party, or section of a party, in the House.

After a short discussion it was arranged that the debate should commence on the following Monday (May 7), and Sir John Lubbock, the Liberal member for Maidstone, at once gave notice that when the resolutions were put from the Chair he should move "the previous question." A day or two after Mr. Gladstone's colleagues in the late Cabinet held a meeting, and determined not to support the resolutions; but, on the other hand, a large minority of the Liberal party in the House resolved to stand by him, and they received the cordial approval of meetings held in various parts of the country, in the week which elapsed between their introduction and the commencement of the debate upon them. To one of these meetings, held at Greenwich—the borough represented by Mr. Gladstone in Parliament—he sent a letter stating that the opponents of the cause of freedom in the East persistently alleged that the people of England, eight months previously, were beguiled by designing persons (among whom he was usually promoted to a front place) into a violent agitation against

Turkish outrage, but that they had long ago repented and were ashamed of their error, and were now prepared contentedly to acquiesce in a continuance of what they then denounced rather than incur the risk of disturbing either the integrity or the independence of the Ottoman Empire. In his view this statement was nothing less than an insult to the nation. But daringly and incessantly repeated, it had not been without its effect, especially in the Metropolis, upon persons of undecided mind and character, and it was high time that it should either be confirmed or exploded by authentic evidence. He had done all in his power to give the country to understand that it was thus challenged in point of consistency, common sense, and manhood. The crimes which moved their judgments quite as much as their feelings in September remained not only unpunished, but rewarded. Their amount had been constantly swollen by a series of fresh outrages down to the present time. The demands of the British Government for punishment and redress had been contemptuously cast aside. From a third to a half of the Christian population of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been driven from their homes in great want and suffering. The Turk, assured beforehand of his impunity, so far as England was concerned, had rejected, as must have been expected, English remonstrances and schemes. And the necessary business of redressing a great and execrable iniquity, which could only safely be carried on under a combination of authorities, had been allowed to devolve upon a single Power, and that Power one subject, from neighbourhood, in a peculiar degree to the temptations of self-interest. Such had been the stream of events. If, being such, the British people were content to "drift" on it, be it so; for he knew no other tribunal of appeal; but he, for one, would not accept by silence, at such a crisis, the very smallest share in so great a responsibility.

The arrangements made in the House of Commons in anticipation of an orderly debate on the resolutions were doomed to total failure. Every seat on the floor of the House and in the galleries was occupied, as the occasion was felt to be a great one. The members had naturally assembled in the full expectation that Mr. Gladstone would deliver battle on the whole of his resolutions. Great was the surprise expressed, therefore, when the right honourable gentleman, replying to Mr.

Trevelyan, followed up the avowal of his readiness to accept a verbal amendment of the second resolution by the announcement of his willingness to sacrifice the last three. Ironical laughter from the Conservatives greeted this declaration, which, however, reconciled the Marquis of Hartington (leader of the Opposition) and the bulk of the moderate Liberals to the motion. Responding to an appeal from the Marquis, Sir J. Lubbock promptly said he would not move the "previous question," but would now willingly support the amended resolutions. This altered state of affairs gave satisfaction neither to the Treasury Bench nor to a number of members below the gangways on both sides of the House, and two hours were wasted in a fruitless and discreditable wrangle. The standing orders having been at length postponed, Mr. Gladstone was permitted to introduce the expurgated edition of his resolutions.

The right hon. gentleman spoke for exactly two hours and a half, keeping the House well together, notwithstanding the unforeseen discussion which had brought the delivery of his speech within the dinner hour. He said he did not propose to move a vote of censure on the Government, for the reason, that he did not see what public interest would be promoted by his doing so; but he wished to say in the calmest words—but they could not be weak words—that he knew no chapter in the history of English foreign politics since the Peace of Vienna such as that of the last eighteen months. It was a mild description of the proceedings of the Government to say that their policy and position were ambiguous. The Conference became a farce from the moment when Turkey had been informed by England, that in no circumstances would she either herself enforce or recognize the enforcement by others of the decisions at which the Conference might arrive. England was the sole obstacle to the decisions of that Conference which Lord Salisbury laboured so gallantly to promote; but, like the power behind the throne in other days, there was somewhere or other a power behind Lord Salisbury which determined that he should not succeed. And consequently, at a very early date in the proceedings, the Porte was informed of this. Why was the Porte informed of it? Why was the Porte informed of it then? When was Lord Salisbury made aware of it? Did he know it before he left

England? Did he know it before he accepted the mission? [The Chancellor of the Exchequer—Yes.] Mr. Gladstone—Eh! he did! He knew that he was to be allowed to use words, and words alone. His (Mr. Gladstone's) question was whether, when Lord Salisbury left England, and not only when he left England, but when he accepted the mission, he allowed himself to be proclaimed Ambassador, he was made aware by his colleagues that the words which he might use, and the decisions at which the Conference might arrive, were to be recommendations simply, and were in no circumstances to be imposed upon the Porte? Why was that communication made to the Porte before the proceedings of the Conference? Why was that communication made which drew forth a lively expression of the gratitude of the Grand Vizir and of the Turkish Government, not to the British Government at large, but to Lord Beaconsfield? Was the same thing done by other Governments? The Austrian Government, on the contrary, knowing perfectly well with whom they had to deal, had declared that when the decisions of the Conference were arrived at they ought to be imposed upon the Porte by a naval demonstration; and unless he was much mistaken, it was well known to the Government of her Majesty that in the opinion of the Government of France the Conference was an idle form, if the Porte was to be informed that force was not to be used with respect to the recommendations of Europe. Therefore her Majesty's Government, by their unhappy act, played the evil genius of Europe; and at the most critical moment took the very step that was certain, in the opinion of the best and most experienced judges, to nullify and frustrate utterly the labours they were ostensibly undertaking.

After reviewing several conflicting declarations of members of the Government, Mr. Gladstone referred specially to a statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—Sir Stafford Northcote—to the effect that the Russian armaments had been an obstacle in the way of the Conference, and had cut off the hopes of its success. Mr. Gladstone said that this statement was in direct and diametrical contradiction to Lord Salisbury, who had publicly declared that the Russian armament, on the contrary, constituted the hope of the Conference. Lord Salisbury said that he knew very well that mere words were useless, and worse,

because delusive, and that it was to the Russian armaments, and the consequent danger, and the pointing out that danger before the eyes of Turkey, that the representatives of the other Powers at the Conference attached the whole hope of inducing Turkey to acquiesce in their conclusions; but even with that advantage acquiesce she would not. Against the policy of mere remonstrance and expostulation Mr. Gladstone protested with much force and earnestness—as Turkey had, at all times, been a country fertile beyond any other in promises. Referring to the despatch to Prince Gortschakoff, published that day [the despatch is given in full on page 300], he said it had been hailed with delight by the friends of Turkey; and he was not surprised at it, for there was no mistaking its tone. In its tone and its tendency it was redolent of moral support, it was charged with moral support, and, unless the Government thought fit to give some explanation of it which would relieve their minds, they challenged them in that House to have it declared whether Turkey had, or had not, lost all claim to their moral as well as their material support. Going outside the Government, and coming to the language of its supporters, Mr. Gladstone said there never had been a time when he had heard so much of direct communications between the Government and the metropolitan press as within the last eighteen months, and his belief was that at no time had it been so constant and unfailing. What the tone of the prints was which were supposed to enjoy the privilege of these communications every one who heard him was aware. He did not hesitate to say that the language which was held among the supporters of the Government in the society of London, and by that portion of the press which had taken what he might call the Turkish side of the matter, was language, the purpose of which, distinct and unconcealed, was to prepare the public mind for war—and for what war? Not for war under the name of a war on the side of Turkey, but one to be undertaken under some pretext of British interests:—

Now what are British interests? and for what purpose is that phrase being used? The phrase is the most elastic in the world. Consider the position of this Empire. Consider how from this little island we have stretched out our arms into every port in the world. Consider how our commerce finds its way into every port on the surface of the world. And

then I ask you what quarrel can ever arise between any two countries, or what war in which you may not, if you be so minded, set up British interests as a ground of war. That is the case in India in particular. We go to the other end of the world as a company of merchants, we develop the arts and arms of conquerors, we rule over a vast space of territory containing 200,000,000 people; and what do we say? We lay a virtual claim to a veto upon all the political arrangements of all the countries and seas which can possibly constitute any one of the routes between England and the East. We say to one State, You must do nothing in the Black Sea at Batoum, because Batoum and Erzeroum may one day become a route to the East. We say, You must do nothing in Syria or Bagdad, because we may finally discover the Valley of the Euphrates to be the best route to the East. The Suez Canal was made for the benefit of the world; but it is thought by some of these pretenders that we have rights there which are quite distinct in kind from those of the rest of the world, and that we are entitled to assert our mastery there without regard to the interests of the rest of mankind. I do not hesitate to say, that nothing is wanted but right conduct on the part of the Government to give the greatest dignity as well as the greatest security to the position of this country. We have allowed the vindication of the great cause in the East to pass into the hands of a single Power. It is true that by the mouth of Lord Derby the nation has been made to speak that which, by its own mouth, it does not speak at all. He has rebuked a single Power, and has cast upon that single Power the responsibility of consequences because it has made itself the organ of the collective will, the united judgment, and the solemn conclusions of Europe. That is the course which we have taken, and that is a dangerous course. We ought to view with regret anything that puts a single Power in a position to take such a charge upon herself, and most of all in the case of a Power like Russia, which, as a neighbouring Power, has special temptations in this matter. Such a Power as Russia, and I must add such a Power as Austria, has special temptations in this case, and it can never be satisfactory to me to see the subject settled either by Russia or Austria, or by Russia and Austria. But the question remains, how are these terrible evils to be met?

Are they to be met by remonstrances and expostulations only? The answer echoed back from the Ministerial benches is, "By remonstrances and expostulations only." Now that, I believe, human nature, the conscience of mankind, and the civilization of the nineteenth century will no longer bear. If you are not prepared to carry further the united action of Europe in which you seemed to engage, but which you defeated by your ill-judged proceedings, you must expect to see it pass into the hands of others; and your remonstrances and your cavils at others will not be appreciated by the general sentiment of the world, until you are able to show that you are yourselves ready to enter into some honourable combination for the purpose of applying some effectual remedy for the evil.

Coming to the first resolution and to Lord Derby's despatch of September 21, 1876, Mr. Gladstone said that despatch involved one of two things. It was either a declaration that ought to have been followed up, or it was a gross and unwarrantable insult to Turkey. The Government had no right to go about flinging those strong words in the face of any Power; and if that Power was to have their moral support, they had certainly no right to use such language. They were either bound to tear that despatch into shreds or to go further in their own vindication. The language of that despatch was as strong as the language used at any of the meetings held in the autumn. It demanded reparation for the past and security for the future; but the Turkish Government treated it with contempt. He did not discuss the prudence of that despatch—he held it to be far from prudent—but was the conduct of the authorities approved by the Turkish Government, or were they marked out for condign punishment? Chefket Pasha, Toussoon Pasha, and Achmet Aga had not been executed, and not one considerable man had had any sentence whatever executed against him. One or two nameless and insignificant individuals might have been put to death, but the chief officers had escaped with perfect impunity, and decorations and rewards had been given to many of them. And, finally, of the good Mahometans who at the hazard of their lives interfered in the interests of humanity and justice, every one had been either punished by dismissal or remained to that hour unrewarded. The reason, no doubt, was that the outrages and massacres in

Bulgaria were not the acts of the Bashi-bazouks or the regulars, or of the Mussulman population, except as mere instruments of the Porte. As instruments they were guilty, and as instruments alone. The massacres were not accident, they were not caprice, they were not passion. They were system, they were policy. They were the things done in Damascus in 1860; and the Liberal Government of that day took up those massacres in a very different manner from that in which her Majesty's Government had proceeded. They were done also during the Greek Revolution, and again and again they would be done until the Turkish Government found that there was somebody determined to say they should not be done again. If these things could not be denied—and he knew they could not be—were they to continue the miserable farce of expostulation? His contention was that such conduct was not compatible with the honour of England; and that if no result was to follow upon communications of the kind to which he alluded, they ought never to be made. It was bad enough to say that you would take no notice of such crimes, but it was worse to notice them in a way which you knew full well could produce no result.

The same atrocities and horrible state of things, concerning which complaints had been previously made, continued, and he therefore asked the House to support the second resolution, which alleged that the Porte had lost all claim to their moral as well as their material support. There was in Turkey an admittedly intolerant Government. Had it improved during the last quarter of a century? He was responsible, for one, for having believed, on the great authority of Lord Palmerston, and on the even higher authority of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, with his large experience of the Porte, that its Government might be improved. Some men, with deeper insight than that possessed at the time by any politician, knew that the case was hopeless. A quarter of a century ago, however, they thought that they ought not to despair of the improvement of Turkey as long as a ray of hope remained. Since then a quarter of a century had elapsed, during which perfect peace had been secured for Turkey from without, and she had had no evils or mischief to deal with except those provoked and promoted by her own gross and monstrous misgovernment. But had things improved in Turkey in that

period? He believed that, upon the whole, instead of improving, they had become worse. They need entertain no fear at all that the action of Russia would endanger British interests. Russia was not mad enough to touch British interests. They had, however, given Russia a magnificent opportunity, of which she could avail herself to plead truly, that what she asked was what Europe asked; and the difference between her and other nations was, that they were content to put up with, and she was not content to put up with, Turkey's refusal to improve her Government. They might say that she was pursuing selfish objects; but if that were true, that was an additional condemnation of the policy of the Government, because, if she was untrustworthy, why did they leave her alone in accomplishing this work? He had hoped that her Majesty's Government would have been disposed to have accompanied him thus far, and that they might all look forward to the establishment in those provinces of local self-government and local liberty; but not to transfer them to any other foreign dominion:—

One of my greatest objections to the policy of her Majesty's Government has always been that it tends so extravagantly to facilitate the execution of the most selfish aims that Russia could possibly entertain, and to enhance her influence and her power. It is a tremendous thing to infuse into the mind of this Christian population the conviction that they have no other hope, no other ally, but Russia. It is hardly possible to dispute that that has been the policy of her Majesty's Government. That the misgovernment of the Slave provinces should cease is my first and great object; but I confess it would be with qualified satisfaction, although with a real satisfaction, that I should hear of the cessation of that misgovernment, unless I felt that a healthy growth of local liberty would come into the place of the abominations now in these provinces.

Repeating that he did not intend to take a division on the third and fourth resolutions, Mr. Gladstone declared, however, that he adhered to them all. If they wished, for the sake of humanity, for the sake of the peace of Europe, for the sake of the obligations Great Britain had incurred, to close the Eastern Question, it could not be satisfactorily done except by united action. And his complaint against her Majesty's Government was that, whenever they had seemed to concur in

promoting united action, it had always been done under conditions which had made that united action useless. It was much too late to argue whether they were bound to take up the case of the Christians in Turkey or not. They might have argued that question before the Crimean War. But in the Crimean War they did two things, and he must repeat the challenge he had made to the Government with regard to those two things. The first was that they abolished the power of interference which previously existed in the hands of Russia. By the Treaty of Kainardji Russia had a stipulation from the Porte that the Porte should firmly protect the Christian religion and its churches. Of that stipulation Russia had a right to require the fulfilment, as well as of every other stipulation. That right was entirely destroyed and swept away by the Crimean War, by the expenditure of English blood and treasure; and they could not have swept that right away, in his opinion, without becoming responsible for the consequences, or without being as solemnly bound as men could be bound to take care that those for whose protection it was intended should obtain either the same thing or something better in its place. But, besides that, and even independently of that, as he believed, perfectly irrefragable argument, what was the case of the Crimean War on the very face of it? It was this:—That Turkey was about to be engaged in a contest of which the probable result was her defeat. England and her allies interfered to prevent that, and gave her a new lease of existence; gave her resources; gave her the strength of which she had been making such a frightful use in Bulgaria. And how was it possible for them, on any principles, he cared not what, so to put out of view the obligations which honour entailed as to say, "We wash our hands of this business, and will have nothing to do with it," or, much more, to say, "We will consent to pay delicate attentions to the Government of Turkey, and to be affording her in a thousand indirect forms moral assistance, which in many instances is apt to glide into material assistance, against the nation which may attempt to carry into effect the judgment of united Europe?"

After stating that he deplored as much as any one the irregular methods to which the Opposition had been obliged to resort for influencing the foreign policy of the Government, but

stating that the necessity of the case was their justification, Mr. Gladstone concluded as follows:—

Legislative bodies are always engaged in the making of history, and it is a very grave passage in history which we are now engaged in making. Sir, there is before us not one controversy, but two. There is the controversy between Russia and Turkey; there is the controversy between Turkey and her revolted subjects. I think the Government and their supporters out of doors in the press are making a great error in this: that it is the first of these two controversies—that between Russia and Turkey, which after all is only symptomatic—to which they address their minds. In my opinion the other is the deeper and more important. The other is a controversy which can have no issue but one, and I do not hesitate to say that the cause of the revolted subjects of Turkey against their oppressors is as holy a cause as ever animated the breast or as ever stirred the hand of man. Sir, what part are we to play? Looking at this latter controversy, the controversy between Turkey and her subjects—the horrible massacres of last year, the proofs which have been afforded that they are only parts and indications of a system, that their recurrence is to be expected, and is a matter of moral certainty if they are now allowed to pass with impunity; looking at the total want of result from Lord Derby's efforts, at that mockery which has been cast in our teeth in return for what I quite admit was, upon ordinary principles, an insulting despatch—can we, sir, say with regard to this great battle of freedom against oppression which is now going on, which has been renewed from time to time, and for which one-third of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina are at this moment not only suffering exile, but, terrible to say, absolute starvation, upon which depends the fate of millions of the subject races that inhabit the Turkish Empire—can we, with all this before us, be content with what I will call a vigorous array of remonstrances, well intended, I grant, but without result, as the policy of this great country? Can we, I say, looking upon that battle, lay our hands upon our hearts and, in the face of God and man, say with respect to it, "We have well and sufficiently performed our part?" Sir, there were other days when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained or a noble blow struck,

it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned; to this favourite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people that had built up a noble edifice for themselves would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the benefit of the same inestimable boon for others. You talk to me of the established tradition in regard to Turkey. I appeal to the established tradition, older, wider, nobler far—a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of those interests in obeying the dictates of honour and of justice. And, sir, what is to be the end of this? Are we to identify the fantastic ideas some people entertain about this policy and that policy with British interests, and then fall down and worship them? Or are we to look, not at the sentiment, but at the hard facts of the case, which Lord Derby told us fifteen years ago—namely, that it is the population of those countries that will ultimately possess them—that will ultimately determine their future condition? It is to this that we should look, and there is now before the world a glorious prize. A portion of those people are making an effort to retrieve what they have lost—I mean those in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another portion, a band of heroes such as the world has rarely seen, stand on the rock of Montenegro, are ready now, as they have ever been during the 400 years of their exile from their fertile plain, to meet the Turk at any odds for the re-establishment of justice and of peace in those countries. Another portion still, the 5,000,000 of Bulgarians cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upwards, even to their Father in heaven, have extended their hands to you, they have sent you their petition, they have prayed for your help and protection. They have told you that they do not want alliance with Russia or with any foreign Power, but that they want to be delivered from an intolerable burden of woe and shame. That burden of woe and shame—the greatest that exists on God's earth—is one that we thought united Europe was about to remove, that in the Protocol united Europe was pledged to remove, but which for the present you seem to have no efficacious means of contributing to the removal of. But, sir, the removal of that load of woe and shame is a great and noble prize. It is a prize well worth competing for. It is not

yet too late to try to win it. I believe there are men in the Cabinet who would try to win it. It is not yet too late, I say, to become competitors for that prize; but be assured that, whether you mean to claim for yourselves a part of the immortal crown of fame which will be the reward of true labour in that cause, or whether you turn your backs upon that cause and your own duty, I believe, for one, that the knell of Turkish tyranny in those provinces has sounded. It is about to be destroyed, perhaps not in the way or by the means that we should choose; but come the boon from what hands it may, I believe it will be gladly accepted by Christendom and by the world.

Sir H. D. Wolff (Christchurch) moved as an amendment a counter-resolution, declaring that the House declined to entertain any resolution which might embarrass the Government in maintaining peace and protecting British interests, without indicating any alternative policy. He objected to Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, that they preached that subservience to Russia which had been his object throughout, and his speech, if it meant anything, meant war against Turkey. It was chiefly owing to the collusion of former Governments in the misgovernment of Turkey, that the present Government had been unable to take a more decided course.

Mr. Cross (Home Secretary) thought that after the agitation in the previous week the country would be surprised to hear that Mr. Gladstone had changed his front. The right hon. gentleman had said that the policy of the Government had been ambiguous. He hoped to show that it had been as clear as possible, and had proceeded in one straight line. The right hon. gentleman said that he had confidence in Lord Salisbury and the proposals he made at the Conference. Now, if there was one thing against which Englishmen ought to protest, it was an attempt to separate one member of the Cabinet from the others. Yes; this attempt to separate Lord Salisbury from the other members of the Cabinet led some people to believe that the Cabinet were not united, until the publication of the blue books, when all these castles in the air fell to pieces, and it was shown that every word uttered by Lord Salisbury expressed the firm declarations of the united Cabinet that sent him out, and gave him his instructions. The right hon. gentleman said there was a power behind Lord Salisbury which had previously deter-

mined that he should not succeed. He would prove to him that the statement was untrue, and that no such charge could be made, or ever ought to have been made. The right hon. gentleman said they had determined that the Conference should fail, and that it must fail, because they told Turkey that they were not going to enforce the decision of the Conference by arms:—

Now, I want to ask the right hon. gentleman if any gentleman who has taken any part in the meetings held on this matter has ever put to the people of this country this question straight out—“Will you go to war?” And that is the question which you shirk to-night. That is the one thing that you do not dare to put to the country, and to this House. Are you prepared to go to war against Turkey as an ally of Russia? The right hon. gentleman will have an opportunity of answering me. Let him answer that question if he can—not in a dozen or even a hundred sentences, but a simple “Yes” or “No.” It is a simple question. It is a vital question. It is a question that admits of no deviation. It can only be answered in a monosyllable one way or the other. Are you prepared to engage the country in a war with Russia as an ally against Turkey?

The right hon. gentleman spoke of the massacres that had been committed. Well, nothing would induce him (Mr. Cross) to say a word there or anywhere else in defence of the acts of the Government of Turkey, which had been condemned. He utterly abhorred them from the bottom of his soul, and he spoke not only for himself, but for every member of the Cabinet. He would not separate himself from the Government, any more than would Lord Salisbury. The Government was one on that point; and he believed that if a Liberal Government had been in power, with Mr. Gladstone at its head, they could not have felt more utter detestation of those acts than they had.

After combating Mr. Gladstone's view of the Treaty of Kainardji, Mr. Cross said that the whole gist and basis of the Conference was that the English Government would not interfere with the independence or integrity of Turkey, and if they had departed from that basis they would have been guilty of a gross breach of faith. What were the instructions which were given to Lord Salisbury before he went to the Conference at Constantinople? In the instructions given to

Lord Salisbury before he left for Constantinople it was laid down that—Pacification cannot be attained by proclamations. Powers have a right to demand, in the interest of the peace of Europe, that they shall examine for themselves the measures required for the reform of the administration of the disturbed provinces, and that adequate security shall be provided for carrying those measures into operation. When the right hon. gentleman said that their policy had been ambiguous, he (Mr. Cross) replied that if ever a policy had been marked by two distinct landmarks, it was that of her Majesty's Government. What were those two distinct landmarks? The first was not to countenance the introduction into the Conference of proposals, however plausible or well-intentioned, which would bring foreign enemies into Turkey in violation of the engagements by which the guaranteeing Powers were solemnly bound. The next landmark was that Her Majesty's Government were resolved not to sanction misgovernment and oppression; and if the Porte by obstinacy or apathy opposed, the responsibility of the consequences rested solely with the Sultan:—

Well, the Conference came to an end, and let us hear what were the last words which Lord Salisbury used on that occasion, not as speaking for himself alone, but as the mouthpiece of the Cabinet:—My duty is to free her Majesty's Government of all responsibility. Great Britain is resolved not to give her sanction either to maladministration or to oppression. If the Porte, from obstinacy or inactivity, offers resistance to the efforts now being made to place the Ottoman Empire on a more sure basis, the responsibility of consequences rests solely on the Sultan.

That was the policy of her Majesty's Government, and the question was whether they should have gone further or not. But after the Conference was brought to a conclusion Russia was still not at all satisfied. Russia had then massed her forces upon the frontiers of Turkey, and she determined to take further steps in the matter:—

In the circular which Prince Gortschakoff sent throughout Europe, he still felt how necessary it was to maintain, at all events, an appearance of European concert; and therefore he made in it a remarkable statement, which I wish he had always kept in view and had acted up to—namely, that European concert should be preserved. The right hon. gentleman, in referring to the Protocol, seems

to forget that Russia was not the assenting party to it, but was the originator of it. It was not a European, it was a Russian Protocol. Russia at that time stood in full armour upon the frontiers of Turkey, and under such circumstances disarmament by Turkey was impossible, because the attitude of Russia had excited not only the apprehension but the fanaticism of the Mussulman population of Turkey. I believe that it was the attitude of Russia at that time that was the obstacle to the internal pacification and reform on the part of Turkey. In all these circumstances her Majesty's Government consented to sign the Protocol, not, perhaps, believing that it would effect much, but at all events, as it was there stated, in the interests of peace. What was the conduct of Turkey after that? Turkey was not asked to be a party to the Protocol, which was a document drawn by the Powers themselves, and in which they agreed to give her time to see what she could do in the way of reforming her Government, reserving to themselves the right, if she did nothing in that direction, of future interference. Well, Turkey protested against that document, claiming to be treated as an independent Power, and protesting against what she considered to be a humiliation of her as a sovereign country. In doing that I think she was unwise, that she was blind—utterly blind, and foolish. She is now suffering for her folly, and I have not a word to say on her behalf. Yes, but still the Protocol had held out to her that Europe would allow her time to see whether her promises would be fulfilled; and yet, almost immediately after that Protocol had been signed Russia throws it at her, and holds it to her head as though it were a loaded pistol, and requires her at once to reply to it. Russia said there was no guarantee that reform would be carried into effect, that all chances were closed against conciliation, and that there was no alternative but coercion. I entirely deny that. Russia insinuated that she was doing a work on behalf of Europe. Now, her Majesty's Government felt bound to protest against that. I do not know what ground Russia had to suppose that she was charged by Europe to carry out the objects of the Conference or the Protocol. I maintain that her Majesty's Government replied, not only with justice, but with dignity, to the letter which Russia sent. Her Majesty's Government would willingly have refrained from making any observation on the subject; but as Prince Gortschakoff seems

to assume, in a declaration addressed to all the Powers of Europe, that Russia is acting in the interest of Great Britain and other Powers, they felt bound to state, and I feel bound to state openly here, in a manner equally firm and public, that the Russian Government is not acting in concert with the other Powers. If any Power has more than another prevented united European action, that Power is Russia. Russia and Turkey are at war—war in a part of Europe which is the most inflammable you can conceive—in that part of Europe where every Power has an interest, and I am sorry to say an almost antagonistic interest. Of that war we feel the effects in this our own country at the present moment, in the rise in the price of bread. War having broken out, the landmarks of the policy of the British Government are as clear as they were before. They have nothing to do with the war. Great Britain has declared absolute and strict neutrality. What the result of the war may be God only knows; but all the efforts of the British Government must clearly be, as far as possible, to localize the war—to reduce its area to *minimum*. Although our efforts will be directed to prevent that war from spreading, it is impossible for any one to say where it will stop. There are English interests, there are European interests, there are Indian interests, there are world-wide interests which may be concerned. We do not want additional territory; we want nothing. We wish this war had not broken out. Batoum and other places have been spoken of, but there is the Suez Canal, in which not only England, but the world, is seriously concerned. Why the Suez Canal should be attacked by Russia in any shape I cannot imagine. Whether attacked by Russia or by Turkey, that is a question of not only English, but European interest. It is the road from the West to the East of the world. Take another place, in which not simply England, but the world, is interested—I mean Egypt. Well, what am I to say about the treaties as to the Straits of the Dardanelles and the possession of Constantinople? Is it necessary for carrying on the war between Russia and Turkey, and for the protection of the Christians in Turkey, that Constantinople should be either attacked, approached, or occupied? I say, "No." These are questions which no country in Europe could regard with indifference; and when I mention them I hope

they are so remote that they will not practically arise. They will not if the Emperor of Russia keeps his word to the English Ambassador.

As to the resolutions, Mr. Cross asserted that they either meant war or the more undignified course of barking without biting; and, in conclusion, he asserted that the policy of the Government had been not in any way to sanction oppression or tyranny in any part of the world:—

It has been to preserve inviolate our treaty engagements, and to set an example which, if followed by other nations, would materially add to the happiness of the world. It is, deeply as they regret the war, to maintain the strictest neutrality between the contending nations. It is, outside the necessities of this actual war, to maintain, as they ought to maintain, and as any British Government would maintain, those interests of England which ought to be maintained. They have no thought of fear; they have no thought of gain. Before the face of this House, of England, of Europe, of the world, they are conscious of the honesty of their own purpose. They are conscious of their own earnest desire for peace; they are conscious, if need be, of their strength. They have, I hope, the wisdom not to use their strength improperly; and wherever the opportunity may offer to stop this war, to heal these wretched divisions, to improve the condition of these Christian populations in a way which will really improve them—and that way, in my opinion, is not by war—to localize, to minimize, or to wipe away the effects of this war, there the Government will give their services.

On the following night the debate was resumed by Mr. Childers (Pontefract), who said he had listened on the previous evening to a speech which was one of the greatest and most noble efforts ever made in that House by his right hon. friend who now sat for Greenwich; and he hoped that the statements made in that speech and the arguments used in it would provide the elements for a solution of the question. If the speech of the right hon. member for Greenwich had done nothing more than call forth certain declarations which the Home Secretary made on the previous night, it would have resulted in a great gain for the cause which he and those near him had so much at heart.

The honourable gentleman then addressed himself to the third and fourth resolutions, and eulogized their general intent and value as a guide to a

future settlement of the question; but admitted that they were ambiguous and open to objections on the ground of opportuneness. But the first and second, he contended, ought to be accepted by the House, and they were so plain and undeniable that he was surprised at the sort of opposition offered to them. In support of this Mr. Childers went through the blue books, laying especial stress on the passages in which the conduct of the Porte had been censured by the British Government, and in which Turkey had been virtually informed that she had forfeited all claim to moral and material support. He denied that the resolutions would tie the hands of the Government, for the British interests specified by the Home Secretary were threatened, not by Russia, but by Turkey. After criticizing minutely Lord Derby's answer to the Russian Circular, which he described as provocative to Russia and encouraging to Turkey, he made some sarcastic observations on the supposed dissensions in the Cabinet, the evidence of which he found, not in the blue books, but in the writings of the ministerial organs, and concluded by assuring the Government that the resolutions would protect them against their unwise friends.

Mr. Roebuck (Sheffield) said—During the long period which he had passed in the House it had never been his fortune to take part in a more important debate. There was raging a war which might spread not over Europe only, but the world. A great empire was at that moment on the brink of ruin, and the lives and fortunes of many millions of people were in the scales of fortune, and might be made most wretched in the result. Mr. Gladstone had said that the conduct of the Government throughout all the matters connected with the Eastern Question had been very ambiguous, but had it never occurred to him to ask himself if his own conduct would not bear the same epithet? So far as he (Mr. Roebuck) could make out, the meaning of the resolutions under discussion was that Great Britain should go to war in alliance with Russia against Turkey. And why? Because Turkey, being a despotic country, acted as despots usually do, and maltreated its subjects. And upon whom were we to depend in our action against Turkey when we set forth in this battle of humanity—upon whom did he tell us to depend for support? We were asked to give our support to a despot who has done exactly the same things as the right hon. gentleman complains of the Turk

having done. He heard an hon. gentleman say no, but he repeated, we were invited to go into a war of humanity with persons who are as guilty as those who are attacked:—

My argument against it is two-fold—the first, that the attack which we are invited to make is contrary to many treaties that we have made; and, secondly, that if we begin a war of humanity there would be no end to our crusade. We have bound ourselves to regard Turkey as an independent nation. We have bound ourselves to be no party to any attack on her independence. Oh, but, it is said, these people have done things abhorrent to our humanity. True; but where is the nation that has not done so? The right hon. gentleman himself admits so, according to our conduct in the Indian mutiny. I do not agree in what he said, but I can very well understand that people under Russia, if we were assailed, could make these attacks upon us. The blue books have been quoted, and the conduct of the Government has been criticized in a small, narrow, pitiful way, somewhat more like that which takes place at Nisi Prius than as great contests are usually conducted here. We are supposed to be statesmen. We are called upon to take large statesmanlike views of questions, and in so doing we fulfil our duties. But when we desert this end and become mere pettifogging critics of the conduct of a Government under difficult circumstances, such as those in which the present Government are placed, we no longer deserve the name of statesmen. I may say, having studied my country for many long years, that her Majesty's Government may not be afraid of the result of their policy on this occasion. When England understands that their object has been to maintain intact the interests of England, and the interests of the world, and the happiness of mankind, they need not fear any proposals—of five or twenty resolutions like those which have been laid before the House. If her Majesty's Government are weak enough to be dictated to by resolutions such as have been laid upon the table, they would deserve to be hooted from that bench, and no longer would they deserve the confidence of the country; but let them fearlessly pursue the conduct that they have undertaken, and the people of England will give them all credit.

Mr. Lowe (London University) said the hon. and learned member for Sheffield had asserted

without the slightest attempt at proof that his right hon. friend the member for Greenwich was in favour of her Majesty's Government going to war with Turkey. He had always held opinions identical with the spirit of the proposals of Mr. Gladstone, and in the previous autumn he took a part in the public discussions on the question, which caused Lord Beaconsfield to compare him with Safvet Pasha and Achmet Aga. In his view our duty was not to interfere with Turkey in any way, but to wash our hands of her and let her go wheresoever her destinies might carry her. With regard to the amendment, it was impossible for him to agree with it, because it assumed that the maintenance of peace and the protection of British interests were safe in the hands of the Government. The fairest way of proving his position would be to inquire as to the way in which the Government had in the past dealt with British interests, and to take the vulgar and coarse criterion of success. He could at the outset admit that the Government desired to sustain the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire, and also to maintain the peace of Europe and the European concert. It so happened that in each and all of their objects the Government had entirely failed. Giving them credit for all possible good intentions, what was the reason they had not succeeded? It was not difficult to ascertain the causes for their lamentable failure. It did not arise out of any particular misfortunes or difficulties with which they had to contend, because, on the contrary, circumstances were peculiarly favourable. The Emperor of Russia was disposed to maintain peace, and it was impossible to believe that Turkey, in her bankrupt state, and having other difficulties to face, could have any great desire to go to war, while the other great Powers of Europe could not have had the slightest wish to break the peace. Her Majesty's Government, therefore, started fairly enough upon their enterprise with every chance in their favour. Then, why did they not succeed? He traced their want of success mainly to the fact that they had at least three policies going on at the same time; that they had carried on a system of concealment by keeping back a knowledge of what they were doing from the public in a manner that had proved exceedingly injurious for their own interests, and that there was a certain want of ability and care in the mode in which their negotiations were conducted. The first of their

three policies was that of systematic friendship for Turkey and persistent hostility towards Russia, and that was the policy of the Prime Minister. In the second place, there was the policy which consisted in doing as little as could possibly be done, and when anything was done of doing that which was calculated to lessen its operation, all the while favouring Turkey as against Russia, and that was the policy of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In the third place, there was the policy very similar to that which was entertained by hon. members on the Opposition side of the House, and that was the policy of the Marquis of Salisbury. The conduct of the Government throughout this matter had been marked by whichever of these three policies came to the top. Then as to the Protocol. Lord Derby agreed to sign it, and when he signed it he immediately annexed to it a note stating that he had done so solely in the interest of European peace. What could be more insulting to Russia? The note stated that, in the event of reciprocal disarmament—which had not been stipulated for at all in the Protocol—not being carried out on the part of Russia and Turkey, the Protocol should be regarded as null and void. It was almost inconceivable that Russia should have been insulted so recklessly as she had been by the note with which Lord Derby accompanied his signature of the Protocol. At that moment the fate of war was decided upon. There could be no more hope of common action. The last thing, and probably the worst, was the document in answer to the Circular of Prince Gortschakoff. Its terms and tone were invidious. The answer said that "Her Majesty's Government cannot admit, as is contended by Prince Gortschakoff, that the answer of the Porte removed all hope of deference on its part to the wishes and advice of Europe, and all security for the application of the suggested reforms." That was a thing which her Majesty's Government said they could not admit. They said they "still believed that with patience and moderation on both sides these objects might not improbably have been attained." In their instructions to Lord Salisbury they had declared that nothing could be done without guarantees; and yet when there was no guarantee whatever, but merely a vague and general statement as to the wishes and hopes of the Powers, they taunted Russia with having broken off from the European concert, stating their belief,

for which he saw no foundation, that they saw no reason why the thing should not have gone on, and that still the matter might have been brought to a successful issue—that very issue which they themselves had so fatally disturbed by the declaration cancelling the Protocol, as far as England was concerned. Again, it was said that "the Emperor of Russia has separated himself from the European concert hitherto maintained, and had at the same time departed from the rule to which he himself had solemnly recorded his consent." That was very strong language to be used by one Sovereign to another, when they were supposed to be in amicable relations. And when it was alleged that Russia had separated herself from the European concert hitherto maintained, who was it that had really separated themselves from that concert? Why, that one of the six Powers signing the Protocol which cancelled it in a certain contingency. And that one was England; and then they turned round and used that bitter and insulting language to the Emperor of Russia, adding "It is impossible to foresee the consequences of such an act." What was that but a direct threat against Russia? A war had broken out between Russia and Turkey, and what further consequences could it be supposed were there intended unless it was that we were to go to war against Russia? Lastly, her Majesty's Government said they "feel bound to state, in a manner equally formal and public, that the decision of the Russian Government is not one which can have their concurrence or approval." They were never asked for their concurrence. There was not the slightest necessity for their answering that Circular at all. It was issued to all the Powers. None of the other Powers, he believed, had answered it; and there was no occasion for our Government to have answered it. Unless it was intended somehow to embroil our relations with Russia, why they answered in that peculiarly bitter manner he could not conceive.

Lord John Manners (Postmaster-general), in winding up the debate for the night, replied in detail to Mr. Lowe's criticism, and vindicated the consistency of the ministerial policy. Commenting on the resolutions, he ridiculed the idea of passing a vote of censure on a foreign Government, and asked for a definition of "moral support." The third and fourth resolutions, which were not dropped, whatever might be said to the contrary,

he repeated could have no meaning but war; and when this point was made clear to the apprehension of the people, there would be no outcry for a repetition of the untoward incident of Navarino.

On the third night of the debate Sir Robert Peel (Tamworth) said he thought the autumn agitation had been most mischievous, and was most ungenerous on the part of Mr. Gladstone. Before the Crimean War, and before the Franco-German War, he (Sir Robert) witnessed the forbearance of the Opposition, the kindness, the sympathy, even the anxiety of the Opposition to assist the Government. At this critical time particularly, it would have been better to have abstained from putting on the paper these resolutions. When they came down to listen to them, and to oppose or support them, as the case might be, they were found in the unanimous opinion of the House to be so offensive that they had to be withdrawn. If ever there was a Government who was prepared loyally to meet every question, to meet every representation, to give every explanation as to their policy and politics, it was the present Government, who had loyally pursued a straightforward, above-board policy, having nothing to conceal, and had always been ready to give the House and the country all the information in their power.

The resolutions breathed war in every line, and the Government meant a strict neutrality, and the country supported them. One party said the resolutions meant war, another said that they meant peace, and another important section of the House said that they meant nothing at all. Was there any ambiguity whatever, with the exception of Russia, when all the Powers of Europe were prepared to carry out the same policy? An ex-Cabinet Minister (Lord Granville) had been expressing his opinion. He brought out of his arsenal that fine old English sentiment, "civil and religious liberty." Think of the idea of Russia and civil and religious liberty. Russia a civilizing Power! Russia, whose only interest it is to take care of the Christian provinces of Turkey. Did there exist in the archives of the Foreign Office the despatch sent from St. Petersburg which contained the record of the number of persons, male, female, and children, who on account of maintaining their Roman Catholic religion were sent without trial and without justice, in chains and misery to the wilds of Siberia? In the critical

state of affairs it was worse than a crime to spread abroad an impression that the feelings of the Government were not with the victims of the atrocities. The speeches of Lord Derby in September, 1876, of Sir. S. Northcote, and the Earl of Carnarvon, one and all expressed in the strongest terms sympathy with the victims. Lord Derby in his despatch said, "Your Excellency will, in the name of the Queen and of her Majesty's Government, call for reparation and justice." He (Sir Robert) spoke as an outsider, without any party or even political ambition, beyond that which every man in the House must have who was anxious to serve his country at any sacrifice if perils should encircle the country. So far from having rendered themselves liable to these attacks—these crazy attacks, or, as Mr. Roebuck said, these pettifogging attacks—the Government of Lord Beaconsfield was entitled to the thanks of this House, and they would secure to themselves the gratitude of the country.

Mr. Forster (Bradford) said it would not be so easy for the Government to drift into a war at the end of debate as it would have been before its commencement. As to the resolutions, he supported the first two, which merely gave a formal sanction to propositions already laid down in ministerial despatches, and which, therefore, it could not in any way embarrass the Government to accept. Taking these two resolutions by themselves, and supposing that the third and fourth had never existed, he asked the House was there any sufficient reason for adopting them? Had Turkey had at any time a claim upon them for moral or material support, and had she forfeited that claim? He thought she had such a claim. The Crimean War, the Treaty of 1856, and the conduct of the British Government after that time, had given her the claim which the protector has upon the protector. Let them suppose that during the past five and twenty years she had, instead of doing her worst, done her best; that the expectations of Lord Palmerston had been fulfilled, and that the promised reforms had been carried out. Could any one deny that in that case she would have had a claim upon them for support which they would be bound to admit? Well, had the claim been forfeited? He did not think he need dwell upon that; and if there had been that forfeiture, how could it embarrass her Majesty's Government if the House should affirm

their acts, and say, as the Ministry had said over and over again, that this old ally had forfeited her claim to their moral or material support? Or how could British interests be affected by the statement that Turkey had forfeited her claim to their moral or material support? If there were general reasons for passing these resolutions, and he thought there were, he confessed it appeared to him that there was a special reason also. That special reason was the last act of the Government [the reply to Prince Gortschakoff's circular]. At the same time, although he disapproved of much that Lord Derby had done, he was not at all sure that any one else would have done very much better. His difficulties had been increased by the necessity, which had arisen of late years, of changing the policy of England, and previous Governments were implicated in the reasons which had caused a change in the policy which meant a support of Turkey. But the fact remained that Lord Derby had been driven into it by the general feeling of the country. There had undoubtedly been a great fear that we might drift into war on the wrong side from the mistaken notion that our interests were threatened, and that fear would have been much increased by the reply of Lord Derby to Prince Gortschakoff if it stood alone. But they had had the advantage in the course of the debate of hearing the declarations of the Home Secretary, which would do much to allay that fear. The possibility of Russia getting to Constantinople had affected the minds of people in this country as a red rag excites a bull. He was delighted to hear the words in which the Home Secretary spoke of that illusion. There was another matter for which he thanked the Home Secretary, who made a declaration which had received the assent of almost every member that had spoken—he meant a declaration of absolute neutrality:—

There are two great schools of opinion on the Eastern Question. There are those who still believe in the possible regeneration or reform of Turkey by itself; but I believe they are a minority in the House, that they are a still smaller minority in the Cabinet, and that they are a very small minority, indeed, in the country. But great differences of opinion yet exist as to how the necessary change is to be made. We know that while Turkish misrule lasts the East will not be pacified. I was in favour of using European pressure, and, if necessary, coercion, because that

seemed to me the best mode of giving some hope to the oppressed Christians, and the sole means of pacifying the East. There are four kinds of pressure which might have been applied. England might have acted by herself; Russia might have acted by herself; England might have joined Russia; and, lastly, the European Powers might have acted in concert. Well, I have never been in favour of England acting by herself or of her joining Russia. We owe duties to our own enormous Empire and to Europe, and there would have been great danger to the peace of Europe if we had waged war against Turkey, or joined any other Power in doing so. But had there been European concert the danger would have been minimized. There is no denying that, however mixed the motives may be which have led to it, this war between two great Empires is one of intense importance. It is a war between two races and between two religions. A settlement of the question by means of a concert of the great Powers might have been possible before war was declared; but it seems to me that under the actual circumstances we are driven into a position of neutrality, and must be content to wait till some opportunity of mediation presents itself. We must stand by and see this war fought out, unless we are either prepared to overwhelm Turkey by joining Russia, or to call upon Russia to stop, in order that Europe may interfere. Turning to the two resolutions before us, it seems to me that the Government ought to welcome them. I believe that an enormous majority in this House and in the country are in favour of absolute neutrality as between Turkey and Russia. I believe we are all of us determined to protect British interests whenever they may be threatened. I believe a large majority of us are also determined that we will not sacrifice the money of our constituents, or the blood of our soldiers, in waging a war under the influence of mere fanciful fears. I think I am not wrong in claiming the concurrence of the Government, and of members who support them, when I say that we do not forget that England has a duty as well as an interest, and that the best and truest way to promote her interest is to perform well her duty. It will be the duty of the Government, I think, to use the influence of the British Crown as far as possible in the direction of mediation, whenever mediation may seem

practicable. If the war comes to an end by a destruction—which is possible—of the Ottoman Government in the disturbed provinces, it will be the duty of her Majesty's Government to do their utmost to secure the future well-being of the Christian population. If, as is also possible, peace should soon be made, in consequence of Russia obtaining a success which would enable her to dictate terms, then it will be for England to see that such terms are secured as would lead to that improved government of the Christian subjects of the Porte which we all desire to see, and without which I believe a permanent peace is impossible.

On Friday Mr. Bourke (Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) criticized in much detail the debate so far as it had then proceeded. He demurred to Mr. Forster's statement that the speech of the Home Secretary had "dispelled delusions;" for no man of judgment who had read what the Government had written, or had heard what they had said from the beginning to the end of the discussion, would charge them with having given the slightest ground for anything of the kind. As to their mediatory functions, they were perfectly alive to their duties, and that was one of the reasons why they did not wish to have their hands tied beforehand. All the Powers of Europe, with the exception of Russia, were against coercion, and there was no kind of evidence that Prince Bismarck would have joined England in such a policy. The argument that a war for the purpose in question would have been safe and easy was unworthy; but, in point of fact, the destruction of the Turkish fleet would have made no difference to the determination of the Turkish people. No doubt it was to be deplored that the demands of Lord Derby's despatch of the 21st of September had not been complied with; but the Moslem population were of opinion that the Russian armies had been massed for their destruction.

Mr. Goschen (London) thought the four nights' debate had most distinctly been of advantage to the country, for it had dissipated many illusions, and, as it progressed, a distinct change of tone had come over it. He trusted it would not be necessary for hon. members on his side of the house to indulge in those splendid *Rule Britannia* perorations which had been heard from opposite benches. He turned with pleasure from such perorations

to the steady and prudent language of the Home Secretary, who had defined British interests in a manner with which, on the whole, gentlemen on both sides of the House had been able to agree. But there was one thing that used to be thought a British interest which had been omitted from the Home Secretary's enumeration. The right hon. gentleman had not included among British interests the maintenance of the independence and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. It was his profound conviction that the idea in the Turk's mind that he was a British interest had been at the bottom of half the misfortunes and disasters which had occurred in the negotiations. Even although in the present resolutions it was declared that Turkey should have no claim to the moral or the material support of England, the Turk would say—"Never mind, I am a British interest. I may have no claim; but I come in in the category of British interests. I am asked to punish the authors of the massacres. Why should I do so? I can refuse; I am a British interest. I am the doorkeeper of the Bosphorus. I know they do not love me for my own sake, but they must have me: I am necessary for them." Whether there was a majority for the resolution of his right hon. friend or not was comparatively immaterial; but that the Turk should know what was the judgment pronounced on him by that House was a result well worth a four nights' debate. Could it then be maintained that the autumn agitation had borne no fruit? He would frankly say there was a time when he had some misgivings as to that agitation; but it had changed our traditional policy. He had rejoiced to hear speaker after speaker on the opposite side of the House expressing satisfaction at the Home Secretary's declaration of neutrality, and he entreated hon. members opposite wherever they had influence—whether in their constituencies or in the press, or elsewhere—to enforce and maintain that idea. It was clear that her Majesty's Government had really expected all along that Russia would go to war with Turkey. That had been the one distinct point from beginning to end, and yet they now wrote a despatch to Russia as if they were perfectly surprised, and had never thought such an event possible. They must not forget that there was work to be done in the East—work in favour of the oppressed populations, which the Government themselves

had recommended during many months of weary labour. That redress which they could not wring or wrest from the Porte might come, and he trusted they would not be jealous if it did come, by Russian arms. The Government itself had given eloquent expression to the demand; and he said shame on the men who attempted to raise the fiercer fires of national jealousy on such an occasion. The Home Secretary had done much to clear the air. He trusted that in the months to come no fresh cloud might gather to sweep across the clear sky.

On the fifth and last night of the debate Sir William Harcourt (Oxford city) said he believed that both sides would be glad that the debate had arisen; for they had taken a new departure since the admirable speech of the Home Secretary, which had removed from that side of the House a good many fears, and he trusted had not dashed on the other side a good many hopes. The Home Secretary was certainly a man who knew what he meant, and he left Turkey, so far as Russia was concerned, to her fate. British interests no longer lay in the channel like torpedoes, so that no one could tell where they were or where they might explode. The Home Secretary had buoyed them, and now they knew what they were and how they were to be avoided. They had heard speeches from the other side full of fire and fury against Russia, and morning and evening appeared in the papers most dangerous articles, which, he believed most unjustly, were attributed by some to Ministerial inspiration. The Home Secretary told them they repudiated all that stuff, and that declaration had not been made an hour too soon. But the practical question was—Did the policy of strict neutrality leave us or Europe in a satisfactory position? He did not think it did; for it meant that Russia might deal with Bulgaria, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Albania, the Piræus, Thessaly, Salonica, Asia Minor. When next we came to make a settlement of this question we should have to do so with an enormous and a successful Power. Russia might be moderate. He hoped and believed she would be; but she would have established a dominant influence in the East which England might have shared. But Russia might not be moderate, and then what would happen? Why, then they would have to rescue British interests out of the jaws of the victor. That was a situa-

tion full of peril and pregnant with war; but if we had joined the other Powers, including Russia, in coercing Turkey before the separate negotiations commenced, he believed we should have avoided the danger of a future European war which now greatly menaced us. He never heard of a more offensive piece of neutrality than Lord Derby's despatch in reply to Prince Gortschakoff. It was attempted to be explained by the statement that it was indispensable to have a disclaimer, as otherwise Russia would conclude that she was executing the mandates of Europe. This was a dangerous argument to use, inasmuch as no other European Power had issued such disclaimer, and Russia might claim that in the course she was pursuing she was executing the mandates of Europe. (Cries of "No" from the Ministerial benches). But surely if the silence of England would have given consent to the action of Russia, the silence of the other European Powers must have a similar effect. All this meant that upon this, as upon every other occasion, the Government had isolated themselves from the action of every Power in Europe, saying in effect that England would have neither allies nor co-operators. There was, however, one very amiable and very pleasing quality about Lord Derby's despatches. The despatch of the 21st of September to Turkey was, no doubt, a very fierce one; but then Lord Derby was kind enough to let the Turkish Government know that he did not mean anything by it, and perhaps Prince Gortschakoff would look upon the recent one to the Russian Government as equally harmless. He agreed with the right hon. member for Greenwich that the knell of the Turkish Empire had sounded. For his own part, he had longed to hear that passing bell, and he rejoiced to see the day approaching when better hopes were dawning for the unfortunate inhabitants of those oppressed districts; and his only regret was that we had forfeited the right which we might have used of taking a considerable share in that glorious enterprise.

It was half-past ten when the Marquis of Hartington rose, with four or five other members rising from the Opposition benches. These gentlemen at once gave way to the leader of the Opposition, and loud cheers from both sides of the now crowded House welcomed what was taken as a signal that the prolonged debate had now reached its penultimate stage. Lord Hartington commenced

by pronouncing the amendment to be inaccurate in its statement and inadequate as a declaration of policy. It stated that the House was unwilling to embarrass her Majesty's Government in the maintenance of peace and in the protection of British interests; but the two resolutions of Mr. Gladstone were not calculated to embarrass her Majesty's Government in the maintenance of peace or in the protection of British interests. Again, the "maintenance of peace" was an inaccurate expression, because peace had not been maintained. On the other hand, what did Mr. Gladstone's resolutions assert? They asserted that the policy of which the celebrated despatch of the 21st of September was the most striking illustration, and which was supported by Lord Salisbury at the Conference, was a reality, and not a sham:—

I will not do Lord Derby and her Majesty's Government the injustice of supposing that their policy was taken up merely in deference to popular clamour or even to that of humanitarian and sentimental agitation. I believe that they believed that to be a policy, not only in accordance with right and justice, but a policy demanded by the true and real interests of England; and this, at least, they must concede—that in the words of the second resolution, "the Porte has lost all claim to receive either the material or the moral support of the British Crown." They must also concede that these are principles which are to be acted upon, and to become the guide of their conduct for the future. There is much to confirm the view that it was the ill-advised persistence in raising the question of demobilization which has destroyed the last chance of peace in Europe. There is a great deal to show that Russia was sincerely anxious to act in concert if it were possible. There is also a great deal to show that Russia drew up certain conditions which were frankly and plainly stated. There is much to show that she could not draw back in the face of the positive refusal with which she was met. There is nothing to show that the Government were inveigled into a signature of the Protocol under false pretences. It has been asserted that the Protocol assented to by her Majesty's Government in the interests of peace was subsequently used by Russia as an excuse for aggression. There is nothing in these papers to support that allegation. The conditions which Russia required, involving some

substantial commencement of reform, were frankly stated by Russia, and were known from the beginning by her Majesty's Government. They knew under what conditions Russia was prepared to disarm. With that knowledge they signed the Protocol, and they provoked Russia by a declaration which has since proved to be the immediate cause of war. The Government from the outset knew that whatever they might be willing to do, Russia was not willing to accept the mere promises of Turkey. Nothing could be stronger than the assertions of Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby, that the promises of Turkey were not to be relied upon. The Government knew that Russia stood armed on the frontier of Turkey, and that has come to pass which they told Turkey would come to pass—that which they said they would not attempt to prevent from coming to pass. And yet now they thought it wise, honest, and dignified to turn round upon Russia, and reproach her with doing that which they always knew she would do. The Home Secretary said that the policy of the Government had been clearly and distinctly marked by two landmarks; but the House will have observed that when her Majesty's Government make a very positive declaration it usually consists of a negative. One of these landmarks was that they would not sanction a foreign army in Turkey, and the other was that they would not sanction misgovernment in Turkey. Her Majesty's Government would not sanction a foreign army in Turkey, but there is a foreign army in Turkey. Her Majesty's Government would not sanction misgovernment in Turkey, but the misgovernment in Turkey continues. I think the landmarks up to this time are entirely submerged. What are the objects of my right hon. friend (Mr. Gladstone)? In the first place, to secure this country from the guilt and shame of being placed before Europe in the position of defender of the dominion of the Turk; in the second place, to make this country, if possible, the active agent in giving freedom to the provinces of Turkey, and peace to Europe, and, in the third place, to guard British interests in the only way in which, in his opinion, they could be adequately guarded—namely, by making those interests identical with the interests of Europe, with the interests of peace, and with the interests of freedom, by detaching them from a state of things which, in his opinion, is not only corrupt, but immoral. If the two resolu-

tions now before the House are passed, we shall at least be free from the danger of fighting again for the dominion of the Turks in Europe. The old formula that was in all our mouths not long ago, of the "integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire," has not been heard in this debate; but it has been replaced by a new one about the protection of British interests. (Ministerial cheers.) Yes, I knew that the mention of British interests was likely to excite a cheer. I am quite ready to fight for British interests when it is necessary. But what I want to be clearly understood is, that British interests are not identical with the maintenance of the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire.

I want to know what we have to do with the conduct of Russia. Are the internal affairs of Russia under the consideration of Europe? Are we prepared at present to interfere with the internal condition of Russia for the purpose of restoring the peace of Europe? Have we undertaken to redress the misgovernment of Russia? Have we undertaken to establish civil and religious liberty and a constitutional system of government in Russia? Does the state of things existing in Russia constitute a European danger? On the other hand, we have to do with the internal condition of Turkey. The internal condition of Turkey constitutes a danger to the peace of Europe. If it does not, what is the meaning of your notes, your memoranda, your conferences, and your protocols? All ideas of autonomy for the revolted provinces of Turkey were treated by a noble lord opposite as idle and impossible dreams. But is Servia, is Roumania an idle dream? Is Greece an impossibility? If the influence of Russia is hostile to all liberty, whether civil or religious, is it likely that these communities, having once tasted the benefits of real self-government, would be favourably inclined to Russian despotism? The third and fourth resolutions of my right hon. friend point, in my opinion, to the employment, if necessary, of force. Now there was a time, I believe, when Europe might properly have interfered with force. I am convinced that that was at one time the true and only policy to pursue, and that it would in the end have averted war. When the Russian proposition was made in September last, previous to the Moscow Manifesto and the mobilization of the Russian army, Europe might, in my opinion, have intervened

with force and without bringing about war. Even supposing that Turkey in her folly, madness, and recklessness, had decided to resist Europe, could the struggle have been dignified with the name of war? But in my opinion everything is now changed. War has broken out, and I can see no prospect of that combination among the Powers of Europe which was at one time possible. We have been told that the first two resolutions do not mean anything; but in my opinion they mean a great deal. The Government have adopted and professed a policy of strict neutrality, and I believe that the country will support them in that policy. But there never was a case of hostilities between Turkey and Russia in which sooner or later England was not in some way or other called upon to interfere. Sooner or later that will be the case; but whenever that time comes, these resolutions will form a guide for your conduct and your policy. They will remain a clear and distinct landmark after the Home Secretary's landmarks have disappeared. Had Turkey shown any disposition to reform, and had Russia, in the pursuit of some selfish scheme of aggrandizement, attacked that youngest member of the European family, then I think it would have been our duty and the duty of Europe, under the Treaty of 1856, to have interfered in defence of Turkey. What these resolutions mean is that that is not our duty now.

After urging that a vast extension of British interests over the whole world might be a source of weakness rather than strength, the noble Lord thus concluded:—Our strength abroad, as at home, consists, I believe, rather in defence than in attack. In India, as elsewhere, our true policy consists in consolidating our dominion, in guarding our frontier, and not in being drawn by every idle rumour and every alarmist pamphlet from a position which is already strong. If it be necessary for the security of our Indian dominions that we should send forth armies to fight in Central Asia or in Asia Minor, I believe we shall find the task, I will not say too great for us, yet one that will tax our powers to the uttermost; but if, for the security of our Indian Empire, it should be our fortune to contend against the forces of nature and against the laws of human progress, then I say we shall have undertaken a task that will prove beyond our powers of accomplishment. There is no

power which can restore the sap and vigour to the lifeless trunk, and there is no power which can check the growth of the living although struggling tree. The Turkish domination is the lifeless trunk, the struggling nationalities are the living tree; and this House is asked to-night to assert that with these nationalities, and not with the remnant of a shameful past, are the sympathies of the British nation.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Stafford Northcote), who spoke amid much enthusiasm on the Ministerial benches, denied that there was any justice in saying that the policy of the Government was ambiguous:—

I say, on the contrary, that it has been distinct and clear. We have always pursued a policy of insisting by counsel, by warning, by remonstrance, and by reproof, upon the improvement of the Government of Turkey. On the other hand, we have said that we will not—because we do not think it right—have recourse to coercion to compel them. That may be in the eyes of some a poor, unmeaning, and unsatisfactory policy, and we know we are met by the triumphant and crushing argument of the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Lowe) that it has been unsuccessful. We do not deny that, speaking in the sense in which the right hon. gentleman used the term, it might be fairly described as unsuccessful. I will not go into all the causes of that want of success, nor will I ask how far the conduct of others may have interfered to prevent our obtaining the success which we might possibly have otherwise achieved. But I will say this, that whether our policy was successful or not, we appeal to a higher standard than that of success or failure, and we ask whether, judged by the standard of international right or wrong, it was not a policy which it was right for us to pursue?

Looking at all the circumstances, he contended that the Government was right in abstaining from the use of language unnecessarily violent and harsh to Turkey, and that it was their duty to do all they could by good advice to improve the internal condition of that unhappy country. The other Powers took exactly the same view. He admitted that they had failed to bring about those reforms, owing to the deplorable obstinacy of Turkey, and partly owing to the deplorable impatience of Russia. As to the future, we mean to stand upon a footing of strict neutrality; but

we do not accept the definition of strict neutrality given by Sir William Harcourt, who trusted the Turkish Empire was going to be broken up. We desire to be neutrals, and to fulfil our obligations as a neutral nation:—

We are told when we speak of British interests we use an ambiguous phrase, and are simply endeavouring to introduce an expression under the cover of which we may, if we please, carry this country into a war in alliance with Turkey. There are interests which we have in common with most other nations, and there are interests which may be considered more peculiar to ourselves. It is, of course, of interest to all south-eastern and eastern Europe that the greatest possible freedom of trade and of navigation should prevail in these parts of the world. There are many matters which are of interest to Europe generally, and I think we may feel confident that those nations which have a closer interest than ourselves will take care, at the time they may find most convenient, to protect their interests. If called upon, we shall not be found wanting in taking our part with those having common objects with us. But there are other interests which are in a manner peculiar to ourselves. It is of great importance that our road to India should be kept open and safe. We attach very great interest to the vigilant protection of the Suez Canal, and to Egypt itself in a minor but still in an important degree. But it is said, "Oh, you are speaking, you are writing, and taking steps of this kind and that kind, while other countries are maintaining a discreet and prudent silence." I do not know whether silence or outspokenness be the best policy in these matters or not, but this I know, in this country there is no choice. When we have come to such a time as the present, there is no choice but to speak openly and frankly. We desire to have no concealments, no mystifications, as regards either this country or foreign nations. It is said that we are alone. Well, I don't know whether other nations are or are not contemplating any similar action; but, at all events, we have been the first to express our opinion in terms which I cannot acknowledge to have been properly described when you described them as "insulting" or "provocative." It is true we have been the first to express our dissent from the conduct which Russia has, unfortunately we think, thought it her duty to pursue; but when we did so we only did that which it

was our duty as Englishmen to do; and though it may be very convenient for hon. gentlemen to taunt us by saying that this was "a provocative despatch," and that it was "one of the worst conceived and most improper" that they ever remember, yet I have not made out whether to the minds of the great Power to which it is addressed, or to the minds of other great Powers, it will present itself in any such form. I think they will rather say that the Government, having adopted a particular line of policy, and impressed it upon the other Powers, showed that they were prepared to adhere to it. At all events, we have used no expressions against which any remonstrances can properly be made. We have said nothing that is not consistent with our perfect respect for Russia, while we have thought it our duty to protest and say that we cannot approve her conduct, and that she must not be understood as going forth as our representative. We were in a special manner bound to write in this manner, because her Majesty's Government was, as it were, the spokesman of Europe in these latter arrangements. We are told that we might safely have joined the other Powers in threatening coercion, because, as some say, the application of pressure would have secured its object; and because, as others say, our force would have been so great as to secure the accomplishment of our object. We know something of acting with other Powers. Was it not possible that, if we had gone with others in this matter, we might have found that they had other designs, and that the improvement of the condition of the Bulgarians and Bosnians was not their only object? Might we not have found ourselves in a very great difficulty? I think the country may congratulate itself that we are free, and that we mean to keep our hands free to act as we may think best, whether by mediation or by taking part in any settlement of the war, so that we may be in a position to act for ourselves. Sir, I believe that in this matter Englishmen, though they may be selfish, are also very unselfish, and that they have interests in common with all the world—namely, the general peace and prosperity; but in whatever position we may find ourselves, we shall pursue that policy which we believe to be alike good for England and the world, without fear and without reproach.

It was twenty minutes after midnight when Mr. Gladstone rose amid prolonged cheering from the

Opposition. Since ten o'clock the House had been slowly filling, and now it was crowded in every part—floor, bar, and galleries. The seats in the gallery over the clock appropriated to the peers were not less crowded, and the House presented the thronged, eager, excited appearance peculiar to it at great crises. Mr. Gladstone spoke much more quietly than when he opened the debate, a circumstance possibly in some measure due to the marked difference in the bearing towards him of the Ministerialists. The right hon. gentleman at that time spoke amid frequent interruptions from hon. gentlemen opposite. Now he held the attention of the House throughout his speech; the outburst of impatience when he roundly declared that throughout the policy they had attempted, from the first to the last, the Ministry had failed in everything, being speedily repressed. His speech lasted an hour and a quarter. After some preliminary observations, he referred to the speech of Mr. Cross, to which he expressed approval so far as it went, but asserted that it was in total contradiction of the despatch to Prince Gortschakoff, which was issued the same day:—

My right hon. friend says that the despatch is not regarded as hostile to Russia in the other European Courts; but it is somewhat remarkable that none of the other Courts have written any such despatch to Russia. There can be no doubt that when the Conference was sitting at Constantinople, Lord Salisbury was instructed to warn the Sultan that the consequences of a declaration of war with Russia would be on his own head. If that was the case, it clearly involved the opinion and the mind of her Majesty's Government that the step contemplated by Russia was one which she had a right to take. In the reply to Prince Gortschakoff we are told an entirely different story. When the speeches of Lord Beaconsfield were compared with the speeches and letters of Lord Salisbury, it was impossible not to see that they had not been dictated by the same spirit. The speech of the Home Secretary was, doubtless, very satisfactory, and that of the Chancellor of Exchequer was more or less so; but who could tell whether their declarations might not be qualified or reversed to-morrow? The answer of Lord Derby to Prince Gortschakoff had revived the hopes of Turkey, and had brought back into the Turkish mind that most mischievous belief that she might

rely upon England as a last resort. In these circumstances, her Majesty's Government must not be surprised when I say that that kind of dualism appears to me to pervade all their later policy. I find an entire want of consecutiveness and consistency in the proceedings of the last six months. Hence what has happened? Why, that in all their purposes, from beginning to end, her Majesty's Government have entirely failed to attain the objects which it had laid before it—the maintenance of the *status quo*, the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire, the Treaties of 1856, and the improvement in the condition of the Christians.

With regard to the resolutions, he did not agree with Lord Hartington that the time had passed for an authoritative interference of combined Europe. That, he believed, was the only weapon by which a satisfactory settlement could be arrived at. The resolutions did not contemplate a sole alliance with Russia, nor did he believe that combined action of the other Powers was even yet impossible. Replying to the question so often put in the debate—does coercion mean war?—he emphatically replied “No.” Adequately supported, coercion need not be followed by war, and as instances of the successful employment of foreign armies in the internal affairs of other nations, he mentioned Holland, Spain, and Portugal. Insisting once more on his interpretation of the Treaty of Kainardji, and on the obligations imposed on England by her destruction of the Protectorate which Russia exercised under it, Mr. Gladstone concluded as follows:—

Europe is now in a fair condition to judge what would be a fair arrangement between the parties. If a fair arrangement were declined by Russia, we should stand in no worse position; but Russia would stand in a much worse, because she would have declined an arrangement coming from a competent and authoritative source. If Turkey were to refuse, then the powers of Europe, by establishing a naval cordon, would bring this war to an end in a fortnight. What, on the other hand, is the course we have taken? Hon. gentlemen opposite cheered more loudly the declaration of the right hon. baronet (Sir R. Peel) than anything else that has been said in the course of the debate. It appears he succeeded in touching a deeper and more sonorous chord than any other

gentleman who has spoken on that side. But I think you will lay your account ill with human nature if you suppose that Russia is nothing else but a mass of deceit and corruption. The Emperor of Russia is a gentleman and a great benefactor to his people, and I believe the people of Russia to be as capable of noble sentiments as any people in Europe. In the ruling class in Russia, however, I am not disposed to place much confidence. With regard to the deeds of Russia in Poland, the Government of Lord Palmerston, of which I was a member, pushed diplomatic remonstrances to the farthest point; and if we did not go farther, it was because we had no treaty obligation or treaty right. It is obligation arising out of our destruction of former treaty rights that binds us with respect to Turkey. But are we to say to Russia, “Because you have done evil formerly, you are not now to do good”? Suppose after the close of the war, when the indomitable pluck of Turkey has been somewhat softened, and Ignatieff should avail himself of the *mollia tempore fundi*, and should say to her—“Why should we two always fight? We owe nothing to Europe. Europe led me on, and instead of encouragement I only get condemnation and censure from at least one of the Powers.” Turkey might reply—“If you owe Europe nothing, we owe Europe less than nothing. There was one Power which stood by us and fought for us in the Crimean War, and in 1875 and 1876 made manifestations in our favour; who gave us moral and material support which we can have no longer; let us lay our heads together and see if we cannot make some arrangement for our mutual benefit, which we need not care whether the rest of Europe approves or not.” Some arrangement might be made in this not improbable contingency which would give peace to the East and liberty to the Christian provinces, but which would leave some of the Powers of Europe, and England in particular, in a position very far from being enviable. We are asked to-night to vote against any future atrocities in Bulgaria, and to evince our determination by withdrawing moral as well as material support from Turkey. We are told that it will embarrass the Government, but that can only be by putting the Government in a position which will make it more difficult to act otherwise than in conformity with the language it has used. I cannot pretend that it is hard to anticipate the

decision of to-night. You will have a majority here, but we are convinced that we have the people of England with us. (Opposition cheers, and loud cries of "No, no.") It will be our duty to take such steps as we can constitutionally take, in order to hold the Government to the better part of their declarations. It is necessary. It is only by continuous labour that this can be done. We seem to roll the stone of Sisypheus up the hill. I will pay the right hon. gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) a compliment which he will not accept—we will look upon ourselves as his allies. I believe that this debate has been eminently conducive, and will hereafter be more conducive, to the prevalence of the best influences which are to be found in the counsels of the Cabinet. The time is running by fast, the hour-glass is fast running out; and the longer you delay, the more difficult will it be to make arrangements favourable to the objects which you have in view. If Russia should fail, her failure will be disastrous to mankind, because it will leave the condition of the Christian people of Turkey, on whose behalf you have interested yourselves, worse than it was before. If Russia should succeed, that Power, notwithstanding all your jealousies, if its conduct be honourable or even prudent, cannot fail to observe a moderation which will secure for her undying renown in consequence of the accomplishment of the work she has taken in hand. When that work is accomplished by her, and not in the way I at least should have wished to see it accomplished—as an Englishman I may hide my head, but as a man I must rejoice. Never to the end of my life can I do otherwise than exclaim, "Would to God that the voice of the nation had been permitted in this great crisis to prevail! Would to God that in so holy a work England had not been refused her share."

Mr. Gladstone's first resolution, namely—"That this House finds just cause of dissatisfaction and complaint in the conduct of the Ottoman Porte with regard to the despatch written by the Earl of Derby on the 21st day of September, 1876, and relating to the massacres in Bulgaria," was then put and rejected by 354 to 223, a result which was received with rapturous cheering on the Government benches. Sir Henry Wolff's amendment was then adopted without further demur, namely:—"That this House declines to entertain any resolutions which may embarrass her

Majesty's Government in the maintenance of peace and in the protection of British interests, without indicating any alternative line of policy."

The subject of "British Interests," of which so much had been heard previous to and during the great debate we have summarized, was brought before the House of Lords on Monday, June 11, by Lord de Mauley, who moved an address praying her Majesty to appoint a consul to some town in Central Asia, which might be selected as most convenient for him to watch over the commercial and territorial interests of British India.

The Marquis of Salisbury (Secretary of State for India) assured the noble Lord that the danger was not at present so great as he supposed, for the nearest point on the Caspian at which supplies could be gathered by Russia was over a thousand miles from our frontier:—

A great deal of misapprehension arises from the popular use of maps on a small scale. As with such maps you are able to put a thumb on India and a finger on Russia, some persons at once think that the political situation is alarming, and that India must be looked to. If the noble Lord would use a larger map—say one on the scale of the Ordnance map of England—he would find that the distance between Russia and British India is not to be measured by the finger and thumb, but by a rule. There are between them deserts and mountain chains extending thousands of miles, and these are serious obstacles to any advance by Russia, however well planned such an advance might be. The noble Lord wishes that a consul should be appointed in Central Asia to watch over the commercial and territorial interests of British India. Now, I think it will appear to your Lordships that those interests ought to be watched over in India, and not in Central Asia. They ought to be watched over, not by a consul, but by the Viceroy of India, who uniformly resides in India, and not in Central Asia.

The same evening Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby (Foreign Secretary) attended a banquet at the Merchant Taylors' Hall, and again referred to the same subject. Lord Salisbury, after some preliminary observations, said—I do not feel any apprehension that this people or Parliament, or the Ministers who govern them, will ever be unfaithful to the interests of England. I am quite sure that so far as it is manifest that our direct interests are

concerned, any Parliament ever elected would hunt from office with ignominy any Government who neglected them. But when we come from these direct interests to the indirect, a few words of explanation are necessary. It may be our duty in possible contingencies to put forth our strength to defend those indirect interests; but when I say this I would recommend, when any one comes to you with the tale of our indirect interests being threatened, to cross-examine them before you believe their statements. Caution, and extreme caution, is necessary before a Government risks the wealth, the prosperity, and the freedom we have around us, and before it breaks the peace of the world, perhaps bringing all the horrors of war into Europe, and this not in pursuit of real honour, but for a theory and a dream. It has generally been acknowledged to be madness to go to war for an idea; but, if anything, it is yet more unsatisfactory to go to war against a nightmare. I would ask those who have been led away, perhaps by their imaginations, into gloomy views on this question, at least to consider what ought to be their duty, if all was true. In the late Franco-German War the difference was shown in this way—they had arms of equal value; but the French always fired them off directly they saw their enemy on the horizon, while the Germans waited until their enemy was in sight. You know what the result of that would be. I will not say that we have an enemy, although it is generally supposed that this war has been concocted against English interests. I believe it may be looked at in another light; but assuming that this is so, what is the wiser course—to allow your enemy to choose his own ground, and to follow him through his deserts and impassable mountain chains, or wait until he comes within your own range, and where your armies will be able to deal with him with invincible effect? This I mention as a matter of theory. No facts are within my knowledge which would justify me in representing that we have such an enemy; but above all things it behoves the English people to act up to their ancient name, and to look at these matters with that steadiness and prudence, which, after all, form the best part of courage. Here in this kernel

and heart of England—here in this city, where some of its noblest virtues are developed, and its finest characteristics formed—here it is, we trust, we shall find those virtues which shall carry us freely through this crisis, that steadfastness and calmness which really appreciates the constitution as it stands, and which does not mistake panic for real danger, or phantoms for realities; but which if real danger arises, if our interests are threatened, will effectually defend them at any cost and any sacrifice until the good end be won.

Lord Derby said he agreed in everything which had been said by Lord Salisbury—that we must be ready to defend our interests when those interests are attacked; but, on the other hand, we must remember when talking of British interests, that these may be made to include anything done in any part of the world, and which was not done by our sanction and by our desire:—

After all, we must remember this, that the greatest of all British interests is the interest of peace. We have dealings with every country, we have political and other relations in all parts of the world; and it is really no exaggeration to say, that no two countries anywhere on this globe could go to war but somebody's interests would suffer by their so doing. We therefore are bound to bear in mind that our attention must not be confined to any one particular point. We have to consider what is the state of matters over the whole world, and we have to consider, also, the risk of involving ourselves in hostilities in any one part of the world, when thereby we might disable ourselves from even necessary defence in some other place where our interests were much more threatened. I say this only in a general and theoretical manner; for my own part, having attended to foreign politics for a great many years, not many convictions have been so permanently impressed on my mind as that of the utter incapacity, I do not say of the average man, but of the wise man, to foresee coming events. Therefore I am very much of the mind of Mr. Canning. Some one once stated to Mr. Canning that war must come sooner or later. Mr. Canning's answer was, "Well, I had rather have the war later than sooner." Well, I am of the opinion of Mr. Canning.

CHAPTER XXI.

Geographical Situation of Montenegro—Misleading character of its name—Its small dimensions—Position as regards the Russo-Turkish War—Escapes the general fate of old Servian Empire—Involved in unceasing strife for maintenance of Freedom—Influence of the firm stand made by Montenegro—Backward state of Civilization—Prevalence of barbarities and of Vendetta—Introduction of Schools—Education of Prince Nikita—Reformed habits of the People—Still the sworn foe of Turkey—Share of Montenegro in the Servian War and in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Insurrection—Agrees to Suspension of Hostilities for the sake of Serbia—Demands upon the Porte prior to a definite conclusion of Peace—Refusal of the Turkish Government—Resumption of Hostilities—Prince Nikita's Diplomatic Note to the Powers—Rejoicing at Russia's Declaration of War—Honours received from the Czar—Policy of Turkey under the circumstances—Forces ready for the Invasion of the Principality—Proposed Plan of Campaign—Description of the Valley of the Zeta—Nicksich and the Duga Pass—Advantageous character of the Pass for Guerilla Warfare—Comparatively easy road round the Pass eastwards—Better knowledge of the Pass now available for the Turks—Share of Suleiman Pasha in the Invasion—Montenegrin preparations for resistance—Commencement of Turkish Operations—Advance of Suleiman Pasha—Battle of Kristach—Deadly firing of the Jcheklitz Battalion—Gallant Charge of the Montenegrins—Failure of second attempt to storm the Kristach heights—A drawn battle—Dashing attack of Socica near Goransko—Capture of 700 horses laden with stores—Retirement of Montenegrins from Kristach—Positions taken up in the Duga—Operations of Mehemet Ali and of Ali Saib—The forces of Ali Saib—Character of Montenegrin Commanders opposed to him—Bozo Petrovich—Sagacious Strategy of the Montenegrin Commander—An Ambuscade on a Large Scale—General result of Turkish Operations on June 4, 5, and 6—Suleiman Concentrates for a Renewal of his Attack—Errors in the Military Dispositions of Vukotich—Forcing of the Duga Pass by Suleiman—Nicksich relieved—Defensible Position of Planinitza—The Thermopylae of Montenegro—Serious Losses of Prince Nikita's Army—Suleiman Pasha's Plan—Second Attack by Ali Saib—Successful resistance of Petrovich and Plamenacs—Suleiman Pasha in motion again—Losses sustained by him around Ostrog—The Ostrog Positions described—Their importance in previous Wars—Burning of the Ostrog Monastery—Exhausted condition of many of the Montenegrins—Tragic Fate of a Body of Turks—Anxious times for Ali Saib—Again lured into danger by Bozo and Plamenacs—Terrible Defeat with Immense Losses—Entire failure of Ali Saib's third attempt to meet Suleiman—Advance of Mehemet Ali on the Eastern Side—Cunning devices of the Montenegrin Commanders—Subsequent movements of Mehemet Ali and of his successor Hafiz Pasha—The March of Suleiman Pasha—Increasing Difficulties—Harassing Attacks by the Montenegrins—The Task accomplished after Immense Losses—Meeting of Suleiman and Ali Saib—Condition of the Turkish Forces—Marching upon Cettinge relinquished—Departure of Suleiman for Adrianople—Mediatory Proposals to Prince Nikita—Substantial Service rendered by Montenegrins to Russia—Necessity for Montenegro looking after her own Interests—Nicksich, its Value and Essential Importance to the Principality—Luxuriant verdure of its plain—Siege of Nicksich recommenced—Description of its Fortifications—Progress of the Siege—Capture of the various Outworks—Welcome Arrival of Russian Guns—Imminent Danger of the Town—Ammunition Exhausted—Unconditional Surrender agreed to—Liberal Terms granted by Prince Nikita—Exodus of Mahometan Population—Considerable Acquisition of Guns, &c., by the Prince—Rejoicings at Cettinge—Capture of the Duga Blockhouses—Political Aspect of Prince Nikita's Subsequent Military Movements.

HEMMED in between the Herzegovina, Albania, Bosnia, and the narrow strip of Dalmatia which skirts the Adriatic, there lies a rugged mountainous tract of country, the general appearance of which is that of a sea of grey limestone, an ocean of rolling boulders and petrified breakers. It is, in fact, not so much a mountainous country as a mountain mass, hollowed by fissures, and penetrated by occasional gorges, which open now and then into valleys of moderate width. From the dark appearance of its once pine-covered hills it derived the name of Czernagora, or Black Mountain, the modern rendering of which is Montenegro. The name is misleading, for although there are still some wooded heights which might justify the title, the first and most striking appearance of its greyish-white limestone rocks is white rather than black. The country has an area of 1557 square miles—less than the size of an average British county; and a population of 130,000 inhab-

itants, or considerably less than that of a first-rate town like Edinburgh or Bristol. Contemptible as such a "country" may seem, this mere speck on the map of Europe has for more than 400 years been a troublesome thorn in the side of Turkey, the Sultans of which, when at the full height of their power and conquests, have been unable to subdue it. The hardihood of the little state, its chequered career of triumph and reverse, and its peculiar geographical position and representative character, all contribute to invest it with an interest and importance which the small and poor territory and its meagre resources would not otherwise warrant.

These features, however, though marvellous as many of the fables of romance, would of themselves scarcely be sufficient to justify the setting apart of a chapter of the present work to the doings of the Montenegrins—the war waged by Montenegro having been entirely independent of the one declared by Russia, and for objects widely different

But if the little Principality cannot really be said to have taken an active part in the Russo-Turkish war, the fact that it was able, at a critical period of that war, seriously to aggravate the embarrassments of Turkey, caused it, nevertheless, to be a very important factor in the great struggle. There is no doubt that had the Turkish forces which were operating in Montenegro in June, 1877, been employed upon the Danube at that time, the aspect of the Russian campaign might have been materially changed. It is clearly necessary, therefore, for the completeness of our narrative, that we should chronicle the leading military events of which, during a portion at least of the Russo-Turkish war, Montenegro formed the theatre.

The old Servian Empire, of which Czernagora originally formed part, was (as narrated in the early portion of this work) broken to pieces at the field of Kossova in 1389; and sooner or later all the shattered portions, except Montenegro, were then subjugated and absorbed in the great Moslem Empire. That such a fate failed to overtake the men of the Black Mountain was chiefly due to the strong natural defences formed by the rugged and inaccessible character of their country, and to historical circumstances, which the limits and general aim of our present work preclude us from tracing in detail. The main fact to remember for our present purpose is that, at the time of the outbreak of the great war, the events of which we are following, Montenegro had for five centuries held aloft in its mountain fastnesses the banner of Slavo-Serb liberty; and though sometimes overborne by numbers or treachery, it had never fully submitted to Mussulman rule.

The history of very few countries presents such a record of constant and almost unceasing strife as that involved in this maintenance of Montenegrin freedom. If ever there was an interval, it was more in the nature of a truce than a peace; and it is in allusion to the unsparing effusion of Moslem blood and treasure in the endeavour to put down the irrepressible little nation that a Montenegrin poet sings:—

“Not whiter is with foam the shore
Than red our rock with Turkish gore.”

It is true that there was, even up to the outbreak of the war in 1877, some degree of uncertainty in the minds of many people as to the relations between Turkey and Montenegro; the latter being often regarded, like Servia and

Roumania, as only semi-independent and subject to the suzerainty of the Porte. This, however, was probably owing to the fact that in 1862 a Turkish army invaded the Principality, in consequence of its participation in an insurrection in the Herzegovina, appeared before Cettinge, and compelled Prince Nikita formally to submit to the sovereignty of the Sultan. What were the exact obligations to Turkey then undertaken by Montenegro is the subject of some little dispute; but whatever they might have been, it is quite safe to assert that they were never fulfilled. Prince Nikita is not the only chief of the Black Mountain who has personally had to bow for a time beneath the coercion of Turkey; but no Montenegrin ruler has ever yet been induced to propose to his country the acknowledgment of the suzerainty of a Sultan. The case, simply stated, up to the outbreak of war in 1877, seems to have been that while Montenegro persistently asserted its independence, Turkey with equal persistence refused to acknowledge it.

By centuries of such determined dogged resistance to what was regarded, whether rightly or wrongly, as Turkish despotism and oppression, this unconquered remnant of a once great empire undoubtedly afforded a strong stimulus of hope to the surrounding Slavonic peoples. The effect upon Montenegro itself, however, of such a chronic state of strife with a powerful neighbour was unfortunate. Shut in amongst their mountain wilds, the people long remained strangers to any civilizing influences, the only object in life deemed worthy of consideration being war, implacable war, with their hereditary foe. The most fervent hope expressed at the birth of a boy was that he might never die in his bed, and the first toy laid in his cradle was a pistol. Montenegrin warfare, moreover, was characterized by quite as much barbarism as was ever attributed to the Turk—dead and wounded enemies being frequently mutilated, decapitated, and their heads carried to Cettinge to be there publicly exposed. Vendetta was a common custom of the country, while constant raids on the Turkish border brought a kind of brigand reputation upon the mountaineers, and gave rise to the observation of a poor Montenegrin, that “were it not for the Turks I don’t know how we could live.” A journey through the country about forty years ago only served to awaken amazement how such a people

could present the slightest difficulty to a comparatively stronger Power like Turkey; not a house beyond the degree of a miserable hut was to be seen, while of roads there were none—such an innovation being resisted on the ground that they would only help the invading Turks.

A change began to come over the scene in 1841, when for the first time schools were established in the country, and the educational movement has since steadily increased. In course of time a printing office was opened at Cettinge, and in 1871 a Montenegrin newspaper was started. The present Prince Nicholas, or, as he is familiarly termed, "Nikita," was sent to Paris for his education, and is an accomplished and enlightened ruler, having two notable hobbies, viz., education and road-making. Under his reign, and that of his two predecessors, the work of reform and civilization rapidly advanced; no heads are now carried in barbarous triumph to Cettinge, the old system of border raids has been discontinued, a code of laws occupying sixteen octavo pages has been enacted, and habits of industry have enabled the people to develop a fair market trade, chiefly with Cattaro, in Montenegrin vegetables, fruit, and other produce.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the progress of peaceful avocations had rendered the Black Mountain men any less warlike. Montenegro remains still the inveterate and persistent enemy of Turkey under all circumstances; and all able-bodied men, even the priests, follow their Prince at the summons to war, and serve in the ranks of the little army without any remuneration but the satisfaction of possibly helping on the overthrow of Mussulman power—Turkey's difficulties being always the Montenegrins' opportunity. Moreover, the characteristics of the Principality which have enabled it to withstand the Sultan's armies so often, still remains. There is no large town or aggregation of people to be found—even the capital, Cettinge, being more like an Irish village than anything else. The small, but very numerous, cultivated plots sustain the hundreds of little hamlets throughout which the inhabitants are scattered; and should hostilities arise, the hardy mountaineers take to rocky highlands and fastnesses, where they themselves, aided by ever-faithful and daring women, can live, but where invaders, if few, can easily be destroyed, and if numerous would inevitably be starved.

In a former part of this work we have shown that, during the troubles in Bosnia and the Herzegovina in 1874–75, many of the Montenegrins volunteered aid to the insurgents; and, indeed, the entire sympathies of the little state were with them, although owing to strong political reasons it did not openly arm on their behalf. As a first requisite in the work of pacification then promoted by the northern powers, they turned to the Prince of Montenegro to secure his neutrality. Both Montenegro and Servia were indeed, during the Herzegovinian struggle, like hounds in the leash. Every sentiment of kinship, every patriotic aspiration, urged them to strike for their Christian brethren. The dominant influence of Austria and Russia, however, held them back—these Powers not being then disposed for action, or not prepared to face the large questions consequent on a successful rising of the Slaves in Turkey.

We have traced at some length in Chapter IX. the subsequent alliance of Servia and Montenegro, the scheme presented by them to the Porte for the pacification of Bosnia and the Herzegovina, its rejection by Turkey, and the war which ensued, when Servia met with severe and disastrous reverses, while its ally, Montenegro, was uniformly victorious. When, therefore, Russia procured by its ultimatum an armistice for Servia, Prince Nikita was desirous of carrying on the war single-handed; but yielding to the advice of the Powers, and to avoid complicating matters any further for Servia, hostilities were also suspended by the Black Mountaineers.

Agreeing to this suspension of hostilities more in the interest of his ally than for his own sake, the Prince despatched delegates to Constantinople to obtain the most liberal concessions possible prior to a definite conclusion of peace. The chief features of the Montenegrin demands were that a complete amnesty should be granted to the Herzegovinians then on Montenegrin territory who had taken part in the war, and also to the Kutchi tribe of Albanians, to whom we have referred on page 221. The delegates at first also demanded the cession of Koloschin, Kucsi, and of the fortress of Nick-sich—the revictualling of which was being carried on by Montenegrin assistance, Turkey, in return, facilitating the entry of large stores of grain into Prince Nikita's territory. Flushed with victory as Turkey was, so far at all events as Servia was concerned, it was scarcely to be expected that she

would be in the humour to concede territory to the smaller of her two adversaries, confident as she was, moreover, in her ability to crush Montenegro when able to give her undivided attention to the task. Prince Nikita, therefore, abstained from pressing for the cession of territory, but his delegates at Constantinople were instructed to adhere to their demand for an amnesty to the Kutchi and Herzegovina refugees. The negotiations lasted a considerable time, during which, but for the large shipments of grain by Russia to Montenegro, the refugees must inevitably have been starved; and finally, on the 11th April, 1877, the Porte categorically refused the whole demands, the negotiations were broken off, the delegates of Prince Nikita returned to Cettinge, and throughout the little state active preparations to renew the war were at once made.

In the meantime events had been pointing strongly to an open rupture between Russia and Turkey, and the celebrated Protocol had been signed by the various Powers. One of its propositions was that peace should be concluded with Montenegro; and the Powers further informed Turkey that they considered the rectification of the frontiers and the free navigation of the Borana to be desirable. As we have seen, however, in a previous chapter, the Protocol was entirely rejected by Turkey, and on the 24th April Russia declared war.

A few days previous to this, Prince Nikita had issued a diplomatic note to the several Powers, explaining that the only point upon which he had felt it absolutely necessary to insist was, that the Porte should grant an amnesty to the large number of refugees then in his territory (said to amount to 90,000), for whom he could not provide, but whose cause he would not desert. This demand having now been refused, a renewal of hostilities had become inevitable, and the conclusion of the document bespoke an unpleasant presentiment in the mind of the Prince, as to being overborne by the more powerful armies of Turkey. "It is now," said he, "ten days since the armistice has been repudiated by the Grand Vizir; and although up to the present time (21st April) there has been no engagement, the concentration of troops which is going on all around us shows that we are going to be attacked on all sides. Montenegro, exposed alone to the efforts of its powerful enemy, will have, as so often before,

to defend its existence by a desperate effort. It enters into this disproportionate struggle without any allies, relying entirely on the devotion and the valour of its sons; but with the hope that Christian Europe, which knows what our enemies are, will come, in case of a reverse, to save the women and children whom we leave behind us."

The somewhat desponding tone of this manifesto was relieved when the news arrived of the declaration of war by Russia. There was now the hope that a Muscovite invasion would have the effect of drawing off some of the really large forces which during the armistice had been accumulated around the Principality. Great were the rejoicings, therefore, in Cettinge, especially when, on the 25th April, Prince Nicholas received from the Czar decorations of the order of St. George for himself and four of his chiefs. The "capital" was illuminated, feasts were spread, and success to the war was drank with acclamation.

In the face of the Russian declaration of war, it now became a question with the Porte whether it should undertake another little war with Montenegro, or bend its whole energies to the conflict with its more formidable adversary. The former course was decided upon, and Montenegro thus became the scene of the first important events at the European theatre of operations. The resolve of the Porte was one which at the time appeared very questionable to all competent authorities, and on which but small light was thrown by subsequent events. Had Turkey resolved to let Montenegro do its worst, Nicksich would of course have fallen long before it was ultimately reduced. This, however, might have been but a temporary misfortune, for the position of Montenegro, of Herzegovina, and of Bosnia, at the end of the war, would depend not upon the issue of the fighting in Montenegro, but upon the result of the main struggle upon the Danube. The stubbornness of the Porte in dealing with Montenegro having been one of the immediate and ostensible causes of hostilities between Russia and Turkey, it might have been foreseen that Russia, if successful, would be tolerably sure to insist upon excellent terms for her co-religionists of the Black Mountain; while if Turkey were victorious, her forces, once free of their great enemy, would soon reconquer the ground lost in the Herzegovina. Moreover, regarding Montenegro as the probable ally of Russia in the forthcoming struggle,

no particular object would be gained by crushing her beforehand. The small undisciplined army of Montenegro was formidable enough in the defence of its own passes, and in familiar defiles and rocky fastnesses which, resolutely held, were obstacles serious enough to the best troops in the world. But if all the half-trained Montenegrin force had been set free at once to join the Russian army, it would have been of little importance in the open field; and nothing would have been easier than to make such dispositions as would have reduced their power of doing harm at home to a minimum, at the expense of one-fifth the number of men which would otherwise be occupied in precisely the manner most agreeable to the Russian commanders. From a military point of view, therefore, it appeared at the time to every one, except apparently the Turkish Government, that the wiser course would be to disregard Montenegro altogether, and to transport all available troops to the Danube, leaving only garrisons in the towns which would check the advance of the Montenegrins towards Nissa and Philippopolis—secure that in no case could the Montenegrin army seriously menace their rear.

Reasons best known to the Turks themselves having induced a contrary policy, it was resolved to close in upon Montenegro with three armies, advancing respectively from the north, east, and south, the converging point being that fruitful valley of the Zeta, where Montenegrin territory was suddenly narrowed by the impinging of Nicksich on the north, and the deep indentation on the opposite, or southern side, where Spuz occupied a correspondingly commanding position. On the north Suleiman Pasha held 30,000 good Turkish troops, ready to make their way, if possible, down the Duga Pass to reinforce the beleaguered fortress of Nicksich, and then debouch into the Zeta valley. With 15,000 men Mehemet Ali was to enter Montenegrin territory at Koloschin, and operate on the eastern frontier; while Ali Saib with a force of 10,000 or 12,000 Nizam troops, besides nearly as many Albanian irregulars, now concentrated at Spuz and Podgoritza, was to give employment to the troops of Prince Nikita in the south, and, together with Mehemet Ali, effect a junction with Suleiman about Nicksich or in the valley of the Zeta. If the Montenegrins remained still unsubdued, a march could then be made by the united forces

upon the capital, Cettinge. To meet this rather formidable array the Montenegrins had only a force of about 25,000, being the whole male population able to bear arms, which Herzegovinian and other contingents made up to 30,000 men. While, moreover, the Turkish forces consisted chiefly of thoroughly trained and well-armed Nizams, the best of the Montenegrin army were in these respects only comparable to Turkish Redifs, and the Herzegovina refugees were but an imperfectly armed mob.

The combatants being so unequally matched, advantage was of course taken by the Montenegrins of the great natural facilities for defence offered by the inaccessible nature of their country; and as many of the military operations partook of the character of guerilla warfare, they will be better understood if we explain, as regards the scene of the most important events which took place, that the river Zeta, after forming for some distance part of the northern boundary of Montenegro, suddenly makes a bend to the south-east, and wends its course about midway throughout the breadth of the country to its junction with the Moratcha, near Podgoritza. In its southern portion, between Spuz and Danilograd, the valley is about four miles in breadth; but above this point it gradually contracts to about two miles between the Srekornitza Planina and the Budosh Planina—both these ranges of highlands being tolerably well timbered. The Montenegrin keys to this valley, were Danilograd in the south, and Planinitza, with Ostrog, in the north. Though small, the valley was the most fruitful and extensive in Montenegro—was, in fact, the chief source whence the Montenegrins derived their daily bread. It may be easily imagined, therefore, how irritating to the Montenegrins it was to see the richest part of their territory encroached upon by the Turkish frontier, which here deviated from the Moratcha river, so as to include Spuz, and cut a large slice out of the small extent of fertile soil the country possessed. But the Turks had of course plainly seen, that the valley of the Zeta was the one vulnerable line in this otherwise inaccessible territory, and hence their determination to hold Nicksich and Spuz at all costs. Thus in 1862, after the defeat of the Montenegrins by Omar Pasha, the treaty of peace concluded by the Porte with Prince Nikita contained an article by which the Porte reserved to

itself the right of constructing a military road throughout the length of the Zeta Valley, and of connecting Spuz and Nicksich by a chain of forts and blockhouses. Some of these forts were actually built; but on the representation of several Cabinets, and after a visit paid by Prince Nikita to the Sultan (February 15, 1863), the Porte waived its right, cancelled the obnoxious article, and had the blockhouses already erected destroyed.

Nicksich, the town of which we shall necessarily have frequently to speak in this chapter, was situated at the apex of a triangle of Turkish (Herzegovinian) territory, which was thrust deep down into Montenegro. The triangle comprised the celebrated Duga, or Long Pass, by which Nicksich was separated from the Turkish military centres of Herzegovina. The pass is by no means a smooth path between overlying precipices, but a fairly broad succession of rocky undulations, hemmed in on either side by mountain walls, from 1000 to 1800 feet above the pass, and culminating in still loftier mountain citadels, on which the Turks had reared forts, or blockhouses, almost inaccessible to artillery. The first of these, after passing southward from Kristach, was that of Zlostap—the key to the northern entrance to the pass, as Presjeka was of the southern; and between these two were Smederevo, Nosdren, Poljana, Bilek, and Hodjina. The ranges of hills through which the pass runs are known, those on the eastern side as the Golija Planina, and on the western side as the Utesh and Njegushi Planina. The rocky undulations referred to as characterizing the pass form in reality a succession of three distinct passes. With a comparatively small force, this chain of passes could certainly be successfully held against enormous odds; but, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the terrors of the Black Mountain generally had been greatly diminished by the knowledge gained in several campaigns by the Turks, and the introduction of light mountain artillery into the service. The few roads and accessible passes the country possessed were well known, and had been duly taken advantage of by Mukhtar Pasha in the previous successful attempt to relieve Nicksich. At the outset, therefore, it was difficult to see how Prince Nikita could hold his own with 30,000 men to defend, not the Duga only but his whole country, when beset with more than 60,000 well equipped invaders.

The most considerable preparations for the campaign in Montenegro were made by the northern Turkish army under Suleiman Pasha; this arising not only from the more energetic character of the general, but because to his share fell the duty of conveying relief to Nicksich—which the Montenegrins under Prince Nikita himself were now besieging—and of entering Montenegro by the most difficult route. The Montenegrins were not only besieging Nicksich, but, in order to prevent relief reaching it, were masking the strong Turkish fortress or blockhouse of Goransko, eastward of the northern end of the Duga; and in preparing to resist the advance of Suleiman Pasha, the chief difficulty of the Montenegrins was to cover both Goransko and Nicksich, and still mass their whole army in easy communication.

The position, considering the limited number of Montenegrins at command, certainly presented great difficulties; but many of these would have vanished had Prince Nikita possessed at this point a general of the capacity displayed by his chief officers who confronted respectively Ali Saib in the south, and Mehemet Ali on the west. The chief command of the Montenegrin forces which were to oppose Suleiman Pasha was given to Peter Vukotich, father-in-law of the Prince—a brave and zealous soldier, but lacking the quick perception and daring energy necessary to cope with so able a general as his Turkish adversary. To him were confided twenty-two battalions, sixteen Montenegrin and six Herzegovinian: in all, about 15,000 men—a small number certainly to withstand Suleiman's 30,000 Turks; but, coupled with the advantage of extremely strong positions, it was a number with which a good commander might have made a very effective defence.

Vukotich rightly judged that Suleiman's main effort would be to force the Duga and relieve Nicksich—sending a column at the same time to relieve and re-provision Goransko. He therefore sent Lazar Socica with 3000 men to occupy the passes of Goransko, while Peko Paulovich was stationed about midway between Kristach and Socica's force, to lend a hand to the wing which might most need his help. Vukotich himself took up a very admirable position at Kristach, some distance in front of the Duga, where he would naturally have to stand the first onslaught of the Turkish army. Knowing this, it seems mysterious that he should have taken only 2100

men with him, leaving the bulk of his force within the Duga defile. To make matters worse, Peko, throughout the events which followed, maintained the most tranquil neutrality, not firing a shot during the whole fighting, nor quitting his position. His conduct was attributable either to jealousy of Socica, or to his not receiving one of the St. George crosses sent by the Czar, and was an act which might have been fatal to the whole scheme. As it was, it resulted in the relief of Goransko, and in a drawn battle at Kristach.

After a strange amount of hesitation, lasting nearly two months from the time negotiations had been broken off, the simultaneous movement of the Turkish forces on Montenegro was planned for the 4th of June. Suleiman Pasha having, on the 31st May, broken up his camp near Mostar, the Herzegovinian capital, marched *via* Nevesinge and Stolatz to Gatschko, where the 16,000 men he brought with him were joined by 14,000 from Sienitza, thus bringing his forces up to an effective 30,000 men. Leaving Metokia, or Gatschko, as it is generally called, though the latter name properly applies only to the plateau in which the town lies, Suleiman advanced with the whole of his forces to the village of Smrjeschna, in the valley at the foot of the plateau, on the other side of which was Kristach and the Montenegrins under Vukotich. Here he took up his position, and sent forward two columns, the first and principal one to Kristach, and the second to Goransko.

Fifteen in all of his thirty-five battalions were sent to Goransko, while the remaining twenty, forming Suleiman's right wing, were pushed forward to assail the heights of Kristach and Gomila, where the Montenegrins were endeavouring to bar the entrance to what was necessarily the main avenue of approach to Nicksich. There was another route, by Goransko, which avoided the dreaded Duga, but the detour was too great, and would have involved a dangerous division of Suleiman's forces.

The attack on the Kristach intrenchments took place on June 4, and was made with great energy and in strong force, not less than ten or twelve battalions being engaged in the first assault. This was met with great coolness by the Montenegrins, and checked by a deadly fire at close quarters. One battalion alone, the Jchek-litz, noted for its excellent discipline in the previous campaign, restrained its fire until the Turks

were within forty yards, when the breechloaders sent them down so rapidly that nearly 500 dead were counted after the fight was over before this breastwork, while the battalion behind it lost only three killed. The Turks, unable to withstand the fire, recoiled, and the Montenegrins, forgetting for the moment that the bulk of the Turkish army was before them, charged from their works, and pursued the enemy with an indiscriminate slaughter, no quarter being given on either side. Their headlong pursuit was, however, stopped by the advance of the Turkish reserves; and seeing themselves in danger of being surrounded, the pursuers in their turn were obliged to give ground, and fight their way back to their comrades on the height. The Turks now made another attempt to storm the heights of Kristach, but were still repulsed; and in a third attack, which was also repelled, the whole reserve joined, leaving Suleiman and his staff with an escort of not more than twenty men. Here Peko's fresh battalions would almost certainly have decided the discomfiture of the Turkish army, disorganized as it had become by repeated failure; but, as it was, the struggle was so equally balanced, and the losses of the Montenegrins in wounded so grave, that each army retired to the position it held before the battle. It was then found that the Montenegrins had lost in killed and wounded about 700 men—that is, one-third of their whole number. Fighting behind intrenchments, however, their losses were naturally very considerably smaller than those of the Turks.

Meanwhile, as we have before explained, another Turkish division had been despatched to re-provision the fort of Goransko, about five hours' march to the east of Kristach, now held blockaded by Lazar Socica. The relief of Goransko was partially accomplished the same day as the attack upon Kristach; but Socica next day effectually interrupted the further provisionment by seizing, in a gallant attack, 700 horses laden with stores, besides large quantities of arms, and two cannon. His efforts, however, in the end proved unavailing against superior numbers, for after four days' fighting the column penetrated to Goransko, and threw in the remainder of the supplies.

The Pivans under Lazar Socica were more cautious in fighting than the Montenegrins at Kristach, and their losses therefore were not so serious as to prevent them from still holding

strong positions in the neighbourhood of Goransko, so as, for a time at least, to detain there a heavy detachment of Suleiman's troops. The hardly pressed battalions of Vukotich also found it necessary to adopt tactics of discretion. The position of Kristach was a *contre-fort* to the Duga, a small plain intervening, to which there was another road entering by the west, and which, offering certain facilities for a flank attack, made Kristach untenable against a long-continued front attack with much superior numbers, especially as in the present case, where the Montenegrin line was already widely extended to the eastward. For this reason, in the defence of the pass in former times, while Kristach was generally chosen to receive the first shock of the Turkish attack, it had been almost invariably abandoned for the stronger position in the Duga itself, as soon as the attack was fairly developed. The very large proportion of his forces now disabled decided Vukotich in at once taking this step. Early next morning, therefore, his whole army, bearing the wounded, and after gathering up a large quantity of additional booty, such as rifles, sabres, &c., fell back to a strong position in the intricacies of the Duga, where a deployed battle and an open charge were impossible. Here they at once prepared to offer every possible obstacle to the Turkish advance; but it was soon found that Suleiman Pasha, with the main body of his army, had fallen back towards the camp of Gatschko. This being clearly to effect a concentration with the view of advancing presently in force, Vukotich also employed the comparative lull in uniting his battalions, and in arranging them along the pass and about Presjeka—a position blocking the southern entrance of the Duga and the road by which the Turks must advance. As already stated, the total northern Montenegrin forces, Herzegovinian allies included, amounted to about 15,000 men.

On the same day, the 4th June, the Turkish forces, by arrangement, assumed the offensive at two other points. Mehemet Ali directed an attack from Koloschin, on the eastern side of Montenegro, but in no large force, and was beaten back with little loss on either side. The more serious attack was made by Ali Saib, on the Albanian or southern side. Ali Saib had here pushed forward large forces from Scutari to the neighbourhood of Podgoritza and Spuz, with the apparent object of advancing upon and capturing Danilograd. Opposed

to Ali Saib, with his 10,000 Nizam troops, and fully that number additional of Albanian irregulars, was the Montenegrin southern army of about 8000 men, posted, however, with great tact on the heights of Maliat and Martinitje, under the command of Bozo Petrovich, cousin of the Prince, and one of the ablest generals of the Black Mountain. He was a thorough soldier, quick at divining his enemy's intentions, always under fire, always cheering and directing personally the movements of his men, attending personally to the comfort and condition of the army, and to all the details of service. It was not to be wondered at that he should earn the utmost devotion of his men, and reckless obedience to any order he might give—all knowing that not a squad would be lost sight of in the affray, and that their personal safety would be cared for as far as the efficiency of their operations permitted. With a great audacity in his plans, he was so prudent in carrying them out that the men were never exposed uselessly—all the characteristic wiles and stratagems of the Montenegrin being employed to bewilder the enemy and cover his own men. In the onset made by Ali Saib on the 4th June these qualities were displayed to the full, the engagement being not so much a battle, in the usual sense, as a triumph of skilful stratagem, and of cunning devices by Bozo to conceal his plans and deceive the Turks, in which the rough country and the rocky hill sides, as well as the intimate knowledge of the country which every man had, aided him greatly.

Perceiving the intentions of the Turks were to make a movement on Danilograd, Bozo abandoned Maliat and Virositza, two isolated hills before Spuz on Montenegrin territory, and posted himself at Plana, covering Danilograd by the right bank of the Zeta; while Plamenacs, his colleague, or second in command, went to the slopes of the Berda, on the left, where the bulk of the forces held a very strong flanking position as regarded any movement towards Bjelopawlitje—the valley of the Zeta we have before described. The Turks occupied the positions evacuated by Bozo, and intrenched themselves there. Everything was tranquil till four in the morning of June 4, when they made a vigorous attack on Martinitje village, the key of Plamenacs' position. The Montenegrins withdrew, to draw the Turks as far as possible into the mountains, but when they

seemed disposed to halt and establish themselves, turned on them and attacked in front and flank; while Bozo, with three battalions, coming up from Plana on the run, fell on them and drove them back with very severe loss. The attack was renewed on the following day, when the Montenegrins, true to the defensive strategy resolved on from the beginning, awaited the Turks in their mountain intrenchments, and simply mowed down their ranks when they attempted to advance. The positions were indeed so strong that the whole attack was little better than a useless waste of life on the part of the Turkish commander, as can be gathered from the immense disparity of the losses—during the two days the Montenegrin dead being no more than fifty, while the Turks lost at least 1000 *hors de combat*, and the triumphant mountaineers took more than that number of rifles from their fallen and retreating foes. The fight on the second day lasted from early morning until the afternoon, and during its progress the Turkish officers had thrice to force their wavering men to the front. Ultimately the Turks were hurled back in confusion on Spuz, and for some days did not attempt to renew their attack.

Thus far, as we have seen, the Montenegrin forces had been successful on every hand, but more especially those under Bozo Petrovich between Danilograd and Spuz, where the Turks had been repulsed with really severe loss. In the west Mehemet Ali made no stand worth speaking of, and was driven back with comparative ease. The most extensive fighting was with the much larger forces of Suleiman Pasha about Kristach; and even here, notwithstanding the disparity of Vukotich's numbers, the success was greater than the Montenegrin commander imagined. It was so complete, indeed, and the Turkish losses had been so serious, that had Vukotich pursued his advantage with the help of the reinforcement he received the following day, he might have inflicted a serious blow and great confusion upon Suleiman, who was much less able to sustain a renewal of the conflict than the Montenegrins. The losses of Suleiman at Kristach were such, that with the aid, at the right moment, of Peko and of the battalions left idly waiting in the Duga, Vukotich might have so far crippled his enemy as to have rendered it next to impossible for him to have relieved Nicksich.

Finding that Goransko had been relieved, Sulei-

man determined to call in the greater part of the battalions he had despatched there, and concentrate the fullest force possible for the attack on the position of Vukotich in the Duga. The falling back of the Montenegrins had opened this pass to their enemy, but the positions therein for defence were so strong that this ought not to have been of any ultimate advantage to Suleiman. The pass had, it is true, been forced before by Mukhtar Pasha; but at that time the Montenegrins were fewer in number, and by no means so well armed as now. As it was, however, the Montenegrin general made the grave mistake of spreading his army, with the exception of a portion massed in Presjeka, along a thin line of four miles, many of the battalions being without any means of intercommunication or supports, and concealed from one another, and in great part from their commander, by dense forests, owing to which he could not follow the operations. The cohesion which existed in the force at Kristach seemed entirely lost; and in this somewhat weakened condition the Montenegrins awaited the onset of Suleiman Pasha.

Day after day passed, and no attempt was made to advance; but on the 12th June at daybreak it was found that the Turks were pressing into the pass in considerable strength. Fighting at once commenced, and for nearly three days the Montenegrins contested desperately every foot of the Duga, availing themselves of favourable positions for mowing down their enemy with their few, but well handled, pieces of artillery, and often coming to hand-to-hand grappling with the Turks. Discipline, however, and superior numbers, together with that dogged determination to persevere in the attack regardless of cost which afterwards distinguished Suleiman at the Shipka Pass, eventually triumphed; and on Friday, the 15th June, Nicksich was reached and revictualled, and the garrison relieved, while Prince Nikita raised the siege of the town and retired southwards to Planinitza. Here he waited for Vukotich, whose tactics had so far separated him that to effect a junction a circuitous march of two days was necessary.

Hitherto all operations in this direction had been on Turkish soil; but they were now to be transferred to Montenegro. Planinitza was a few miles southwards of Nicksich, on Montenegrin territory, and held a position towards the line of

the Zeta valley on its northern side, corresponding to that held by Danilograd on the southern, only that it was by nature a far stronger and more defensible position than Danilograd could possibly be made. It was, in fact, the key of the Zeta Pass—a narrow defile which was the only way by which Montenegro's most fertile expanse of land could be invaded from Nicksich. It would seem, therefore, the most natural thing in the world, from a military point of view, that Prince Nikita should not have lost a moment in fortifying such a point of vantage, in case Suleiman, with forces now strongly massed at Nicksich, should determine upon invading Montenegro. To neglect to strengthen and hold such a place, which might be regarded as the Thermopylæ of Montenegro, would indeed—regarding the matter simply in a military light—seem most incredible folly or carelessness. It appears, however, that after the losses at Kristach, which were certainly serious compared with the small numbers at his disposal, Prince Nikita resolved not to risk the loss of many men, being confident of wearing out the Turks by continual attacks, which cost him comparatively few of his brave mountaineers.

Whether, however, the Prince desired to make a stand at Planinitza or not, but little time was allowed him to decide. Before even his scanty forces could be joined by those of Vukotich, it became clear that Suleiman had determined to invade Montenegro. His design apparently consisted in traversing the Principality from north to south, burning the villages on each side of him, effecting a junction with Ali Saib's corps, which was to advance to meet him from the south, and then march upon Cettinge, the capital. The execution of this plan was commenced by Ali Saib early in the morning of the 16th June, when Cettinge was aroused by the thunder of cannon on the Albanian side. Ali had again moved his forces from Podgoritza and Spuz, to storm the positions held by Bozo Petrovich. The attacking column was composed of a body of Mallisori (Albanians of the districts north of the Drin), supported by regulars. The Montenegrin outposts were gradually withdrawn fighting, until the Turks reached, by a succession of elevations, the slopes of both hills, and nearly the summit of the southern one, when a vigorous charge in front and flank drove them back the whole distance traversed—about four miles. The attack was renewed with some addi-

tional forces, but with the same result, the Turks being again driven back on their reserves. By this time part of the forces of Plamenacs came up from Martinitje, and the third assault was thus met by a more vigorous resistance; and the Turks, whose numbers had also been increased from their reserves, were again driven back to their point of departure. Two more attacks were made—the battle lasting altogether nine hours. The reluctance of the Turks again to meet their determined enemy was evident at the last attack from the more disorganized manner of their advance; and springing from their intrenchments, yataghan in hand, the united forces of Petrovich and Plamenacs pursued them until the flight became a rout, only stopping under the guns of Spuz. Considerable spoil fell to the share of the Montenegrins, whose losses were only twenty-six killed and fifty wounded, while the killed and wounded of their enemy exceeded the number lost on the previous occasion, in the earlier part of June.

At Nicksich, Suleiman Pasha gave his men a brief period of hardly earned rest, and on June 17 left the fortress with 20,000 men and twenty pieces of artillery, and advanced so rapidly that he forced the Zeta Pass and appeared in front of the Montenegrins before any united resistance could be opposed to him. When this occurred, in fact, the half of the Montenegrin army, with the Prince, was still at Lukovo, east of Nicksich, *en route* for Ostrog; the other half, under Vukotich, near Ostrog. The Turks, in so promptly occupying Planinitza and the heights above it, cut the Montenegrin army in two, and might have attacked and broken up the Prince's Lukovo camp without Vukotich knowing it. The dispositions of Suleiman, however, at this moment seem to imply that he was not fully aware of his opportunity. He was, in fact, now about to experience some of the uncertainties and harassing difficulties which had ever attended an invasion of Montenegro, with the important advantage, however, that he had so cut in between his enemy's forces, as to neutralize to a great extent the Prince's battalions, leaving only those under Vukotich—now worn by incessant fighting and marching—immediately to oppose him.

Unaware of the exact position of Prince Nikita, the Turkish commander now sent one column down by the bank of the Zeta, and another along the heights to Ostrog. The former was caught in

an ambush by the Prince with four battalions of Montenegrins, and so frightfully cut up that it precipitately retreated by the way it came, leaving a mass of dead and dying men and horses covering the ground where they were attacked. The other was met in the little plateau and in the woods about Ostrog, where they had to force their way up the steep, rocky, and wooded slope to gain the heights above. In securing the positions to enable the whole army to ascend these heights three days were passed, and if the great exhaustion of Vukotich's troops had not permitted a detachment of Turks to gain almost inaccessible summits, the advance might have been stopped at Ostrog.

These heights of Ostrog, across which Suleiman had to make his way from Planinitza to join Ali Saib in the Zeta valley, constituted one of the best positions in all Montenegro for defence, and had been famous in previous wars with Turkey. There was a Higher and a Lower Ostrog, on each of which was situated a monastery. That of Lower Ostrog was perched on a small plateau formed by the fall of a portion of the mountain behind it. Two or three immense boulders, resembling the bastions of a regular fortification, lay in front of the monastic buildings, and shut out the sight of them from below. There, wedged between two of these boulders, stood the little church dedicated to the Holy Trinity, rebuilt in 1840, after being partially destroyed by the Turks.

Ostrog the Higher was reached by a series of stepping-stones, only affording room for one person to pass at the same time; it was scooped out of the face of a precipitous rock about 200 feet below its summit. It was a hermitage rather than a monastery, except that the monk who inhabited it solaced himself by descending at times to enjoy the company of his brethren below. Adjoining the monastery chapel was the powder magazine belonging to the district. A spring gushing from the rock in this out of the way place afforded an unfailing supply of water. Near was a little garden of herbs, only accessible from the hermitage. A loop-holed wall, two or three rifles, besides piles of stones, conveniently placed for hurling on the head of any intruder, made the place impregnable, whilst the garden and spring of water saved it from many of the privations of a blockade. It was said never to have been entered by the Turks, except for a short time during the war of 1862-63.

On that occasion the Grand-voivode Mirko held this post with twenty-six men; and for eight days such cannon as the Turkish army had been able to drag to this point played from the heights opposite upon the primitive walls of this monastic fortress, but without making much impression upon the rock. Three or four assaults were easily repelled, with great loss to the assailants; and when provisions failed him Mirko withdrew with the loss of only one man, and reached Cettinge without molestation, in the face of thousands of hostile troops, who entered the hermitage only after the last of its defenders had retired.

The only explanation of these positions not having been taken advantage of more fully by Vukotich on the present occasion, appears to have been that his men were thoroughly exhausted after their previous hard fighting in the Duga, the long two days' march which succeeded, from the absence of food, and exposure to one of the most bitter storms ever known in the country. When all this is considered, the opposition which actually was offered by the mountaineers appears in the light of one of the finest pieces of hardy bravery which history can record.

On the third day the obstinately contested passage was effected by Suleiman, and the heights gained by the whole army and such part of the horse train as had not been killed—many horses falling by the way. From here, forming a huge irregular circle of detachments occupying the strongest points of the ground, the trains occupying the centre, the Turkish army moved on. The ancient Ostrog monastery, spared in 1862, notwithstanding its desperate resistance at that time, now shared the fate of every other building, and was burnt to the ground before the Turks left it. The movement of Suleiman was necessarily a very slow and costly one, but his force and discipline made the way sure. The progress made was about two miles a day, the battalions being constantly obliged to defend themselves from the assaults of the Montenegrins, who watched every opportunity for getting an advantage over isolated detachments and cutting off stragglers. Ammunition became exhausted at one time, and the assailants were obliged to use their yataghans until the Prince had sent a fresh supply. The men went into action with only three days' supplies of food, and the fight lasted seven days, including that of the passage of Planinitza, when the affair really began.

In the last four days they had therefore only what they could get from the wrecks of the Turkish train or pick up by the way. Suleiman Pasha's army followed a route along the highlands which ran on the eastward side of, and nearly parallel with, the Bjelopawlitje, or valley of the Zeta, debouching into the latter nearly opposite Danilo-grad. The route was one of extreme difficulty, aggravated by the tactics which the Montenegrins, with their better knowledge of the country, constantly adopted to menace and mislead their foes. One body of several hundred Turks took a ravine, which they supposed led to the valley below, and were closely pursued and shut in it. Finding that it opened on a cliff, they fell or scrambled, driven down by showers of stones from above, and when they went over were caught by the Montenegrins waiting for them below, with the result that they were entirely destroyed. As a rule, however, Suleiman's forces kept to the hills, preferring to put up with the harassings attacks of Vukotich rather than descend into the valley and expose themselves to the two fires—of Vukotich on their present side, and of Prince Nikita who, with the forces lately besieging Nicksich, kept watch from the opposite side of the Zeta, and awaited every opportunity.

For Ali Saib these were anxious times. He knew that Suleiman Pasha had left Nicksich for Spuz, but could obtain no news at all of the progress he was making. Defeated in his enterprise of the 16th, and uncertain as to how things were going with Suleiman, Ali hesitated to advance again; though the distance between himself and his colleague could not be more than twenty miles. On the night of the 17th a distant smoke was seen from Spuz in the direction of Nicksich. Was this a signal from Suleiman Pasha? On the 18th the smoke had increased immensely, and Ali Saib Pasha wished to push forward his troops in its direction; but his generals dissuaded him, on the ground that the Montenegrins might be the authors of the flames, attempting thus to draw him forward. On the 19th, however, the boom of cannon came slowly along as well as the smoke, and Ali Saib, no longer to be held back, ordered an advance in force towards Martinitje. Regulars and irregulars, his army still amounted to more than 12,000 men, and in the expectation of meeting and reinforcing Suleiman, encamping on Montenegrin territory,

and then marching at once upon Cettinge, large quantities of munitions, tents, and provisions were taken. To the surprise of Ali's twice-beaten forces there was hardly a Montenegrin to oppose them; and the lower slopes of Martinitje, that had hitherto been impregnable, were now occupied with ease. The occasional Montenegrin shell which came bounding in among the Turks from the distant heights of Piperi was really unnoticed in the joy of feeling that somebody else was now occupied in fighting the shrewd Black Mountain men, for whose mode of warfare Ali had not yet proved himself a match. On the 20th, however, all this repose and easy conquest came to an end, for the Montenegrins were found to be pursuing the same tactics as on previous occasions, of luring their foes into a trap in which they would be exposed to a flank and rear attack. The higher grounds of Martinitje were occupied strongly by Plamenacs, and the Turks were compelled to stop and assault the position. As usual, Ali's troops were repulsed, and when they were withdrawing from the unsuccessful assault, already in great confusion, they were taken in the rear by Bozo with two battalions, which had been kept out of sight. The appearance of these battalions was the cause of a panic, in which regulars and irregulars, horse and foot, utterly abandoning all defence, again sought safety under the guns of Spuz. The Montenegrins pursued rapidly after them, yataghan in hand, and the flight of the Albanian irregulars only ceased when they reached Podgoritza. The guns of the Turkish forts only stopped the pursuit, everything being abandoned except the artillery—even the intrenched positions which Ali had held just within the Montenegrin frontier at Maliat, Virositza, and Tankozevina. Three hours the pursuit lasted, tents, provisions, ammunition, and horses in abundance being left in the hands of the victorious Montenegrins, while hundreds of the dead and wounded were left where they fell. The rout was more complete than any during the campaign in the little state; and thus ended the last attempt of Ali Saib to open a way northward to Danilo-grad. His army never reached this, the first place of any consequence on Montenegrin territory—the subsequent meeting of his own and Suleiman's forces taking place some way below it, on Turkish territory.

It was not till the 23rd of June that Mehemet Ali, after one or two minor reverses, to which

we have referred, felt himself strong enough to attempt another diversion on the western side of the Principality; his object being to penetrate Montenegro from Koloschin, and make his way by the Moratscha valley to the rendezvous of Suleiman Pasha and Ali Saib. To enter this valley on either side rather high mountains have to be climbed; and as the Montenegrins had not more than 3000 men to oppose the 10,000 or 12,000 of Mehemet Ali, it became necessary to take advantage of all the natural obstacles to an invader presented by the Wassoivichi hills. The Voivode Milian, who was in chief command, accordingly arranged a plan of defence both ingenious and effective. His forces were in three divisions, being those of the districts of Wassoivichi, Drobniak, and Moratscha, respectively. Mehemet Ali entered Montenegrin territory early on the 23rd June, and was allowed to push forward a considerable distance without opposition. The Wassoivichi followed the Turkish army unobserved, keeping a position well in the rear, while the men of Drobniak took positions in ambush on the right flank, those of Moratscha alone being visible at the bottom of the valley for the defence of the convent. The hill by which the Turks approached was at least 1500 feet high, and when they had got within rifle-shot of the Moratscha convent, the defence began, when Milian with the Wassoivichi stormed down the hill on the irregular advance, and cut them off from the regular reserves. Pekovich with the Drobniaks charged on the flank, and the foremost bodies of Turks took to precipitate flight back on their reserves. The whole then rushed back up the mountain, pursued all the way by the wild-goat-footed Wassoivichi and Moratschani. The result was a brilliant victory for the defenders, and the complete paralysis of the whole expedition of Mehemet Ali. The number of Turks killed was very large, the alarm inspired by Milian's singular plan of attack causing them in many instances to fall an easy prey to their unsparing foe. Had the Turks, however, chosen to renew the attack the next day, as it was feared at the time they would, the Montenegrins would probably have fared very hardly, as nearly all their ammunition was exhausted.

Mehemet Ali subsequently made one or two ineffectual attempts to retrieve his misfortunes, but ultimately seems to have given up all hope; for on the 15th July he withdrew the bulk of

his forces to Sienitza, whence, as we shall see in a future chapter, he was soon afterwards transferred to Shumla to replace Abdul Kerim Pasha. Hafiz Pasha, who succeeded him, fared no better than Mehemet himself; for, after a very hotly contested engagement near Jezero, he was signally defeated and compelled to retreat on the 12th September following by Socica, under whom the Montenegrin forces on the east and north-east had at that time been united.

In the meantime Suleiman Pasha had been struggling on, harassed, as rarely general had ever been before, by active and infuriated mountaineers. Ostrog, as we have seen, had been occupied after hard fighting on June 19, but to remain there would only have been to court disaster; the secret of successful Montenegrin resistance having ever been, as we have already remarked, that while a small invading force would be easily defeated, a large one would assuredly be starved. Pushing on, therefore, on the 20th, the memorable day of Ali Saib's third and last attempt to reach a helping hand, Suleiman found that his men would not by any possibility be able to follow the road in the valley, owing to the Montenegrins holding the heights above them. The artillery of the Prince also shelling them at every opportunity from the opposite heights, they were obliged to fight for the higher ground, where there was no road, and where a heavy growth of small trees and broken rocks made excellent cover from the ever-active enemy who beset them, but rendered locomotion very difficult in any circumstances. The guides, who were inhabitants of Nicksich, deserted in the neighbourhood of the Montenegrin forces; and two or three miles were gained under frightful sacrifices—horses falling by the way from thirst and exhaustion, and the men faring little better, besides being cut down by the incessant fire at close quarters of the Montenegrins under Vukotich. The enormous pressure felt by the Turks may be understood from the fact, that the right or western bank of the Zeta, and the wider part of the plain beyond it, were left unmolested, Suleiman not daring to divide his battalions by sending a force down that side into the neighbourhood of the Prince. Fighting every day for eight days, marching over rocky precipitous paths under a hot sun, with a scarcity of water, and with a most insufficient sanitary service, Suleiman Pasha lost in killed, wounded, and invalided a large pro-

portion of his men. Caverns, holes, and gullies by the way were filled with dead, who in other places literally covered the ground. The air at Ostrog was rendered offensive even to the mountain summits by the masses of dead men and horses in the valley.

The distance traversed by Suleiman during this eight days' march was less than 20 miles. He had to run the gauntlet of Plamenacs' division at Martinitje; but as the country here was rather more favourable for deploying, the opposition was easily overcome, and on June 24 he was able to join hands with Ali Saib below Danilograd, and just within the borders of Turkey.

The Turks maintained that the object of their operations was fully attained, since the two corps of Suleiman Pasha and Ali Saib did really meet, as had been intended. If, however, this was the primary object of the two corps, it would seem as if it might have been attained more readily and at less expense, by marching round, instead of through Montenegro. If the matter be regarded more broadly—if it be borne in mind that the final object of the plan was to break up once and for ever the forces of Montenegro, to devastate the country, to take possession of the capital, and to destroy the independence of the Principality—then it is evident that not one of these aims was accomplished. During this campaign of three weeks the corps of Suleiman Pasha and of Ali Saib, whose numbers together amounted to 45,000 men, had at least 10,000 men placed *hors de combat*. They lost a great quantity of arms and ammunition, and were so weakened by fatigue and by privations of all kinds, that on arriving at Podgoritza Suleiman Pasha did not seem at all inclined to pursue any further this destructive struggle in the midst of naked rocks, under a burning sun, and during the greater part of the time without water. The sanitary service, moreover, which in the Ottoman army had always been greatly neglected, was in a lamentable condition, and this could scarcely fail to have a demoralizing effect on the troops. The hospitals of Podgoritza and Scutari were crowded with sick and wounded. There were at least 3000 patients, of whom 1700 at Scutari had only five doctors to attend to them. The Montenegrins, who had lost about 2000 in killed and wounded, were still a formidable force for the Turks to conquer. If the latter had persisted in their intention of marching upon Cet-

tinge, the Montenegrins might have had to give way before the united corps of Suleiman Pasha and Ali Saib; but they would have inflicted losses upon the advancing enemy, for which the occupation of Cettinge—so poor in resources—would scarcely have compensated them. In any case the Turks could not have carried out their plan without depriving themselves of troops, for whose services there had become urgent need in another part of the country. It was considerations of this kind which ultimately induced the Turkish Government to abandon its plan for crushing Montenegro, and to summon the corps of Suleiman Pasha to Roumelia, where the march of General Gourko had created great alarm.

Having arrived at this resolution, Suleiman was ordered from Podgoritza, and on the 16th of July a fleet of steamers embarked part of his forces at Antivari, while the remainder passed overland—the ultimate destination of all being Adrianople and the Balkans.

The wave of Ottoman invasion having passed, and the object of Suleiman's expedition having been to some extent, at least, accomplished, whilst, on the other hand, the Montenegrins had certainly not been humiliated, it was thought that Prince Nikita might be disposed to come to terms. The English consul at Ragusa accordingly suggested that the Montenegrins should now cease their gallant resistance and conclude peace. The mountaineers, however, listened respectfully to the advice, drank to the health of the Queen of England, declared that they looked on Lord Derby as the greatest living statesman; and shortly afterwards began to plan new expeditions against an enemy they regarded with hatred more bitter than ever since Suleiman's devastating march. In effect they said—"We shall make peace, but it will be at Scutari (Albania), not at Constantinople. For ages the Czernagorians have striven for their existence, and while other European peoples have gained all the comforts of civilization, we alone, a Christian race, have been compelled to remain pent up amid mountains, debarred from the opportunity of advancing in industry and commerce. We will no longer remain thus isolated amid barbarians." The war between Russia and Turkey was referred to, and though Prince Nikita apparently refrained from pledging himself to continue hostilities as an ally of Russia, it was evidently no small satisfaction to him to have been able to draw off forces which,

during recent critical events, might have been of such immense service to Turkey had they been upon the Danube; and there was plainly the hope that, while in pursuit of its own ends, Montenegro might yet further assist those of Russia.

In truth, Russia owed a substantial debt of honour to the little Principality. To have engaged the attention of 60,000 of the finest Turkish troops, who might easily have turned the scale at Simnitsa, was sufficient to warrant the Montenegrins in believing that when the day of reckoning came, neither their brave comrades who died at Kristach, nor Turkish ravages in the Zeta valley, would be forgotten by the Czar. There was much, however, in history to lead the Montenegrins to conclude that, with the very best intentions on the part of the Czar personally, Russia would only befriend them in proportion as they were able to take care of themselves. Depending on such friendship, Montenegro had too often found herself abandoned by Russia, as well as by other Powers, when these had accomplished their ends, partly with the help of the bold mountaineers. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Montenegrins should have resolved now to obtain for themselves the extensions of territory deemed necessary, on the strength of the hope that the ultimate settlement would secure them permanently to their country.

Above all there was the Turkish fortress of Nicksich, which for centuries had penetrated like a hostile wedge far down into Montenegrin territory, and continually overawed and threatened its northern frontier. But beyond the military consideration of its being a powerful advanced post for the Turks, Nicksich, which was originally Montenegrin, was now sorely needed by its former owners, on account of the magnificent and fertile plain around it; increasing civilization having caused the need for more cultivable land to be acutely felt. The merest stranger meeting such a plain, after toiling over the grey barren rock stretching miles around, could easily sympathize with the longing of the Montenegrins for such a fertile expanse. There was no such plain in all Montenegro, and even the Lower Zeta presented no such show of rich green herbage. Horses and men alike felt an irresistible sense of exhilaration at the sight of such luxuriant verdure, after climbing the rocky paths around, with scarcely a herb by the wayside to be seen. The plain was

about 100 squares miles in extent, was watered by two streams, and the arable land contained in it was estimated to equal the cultivable area of the whole Principality. Well, therefore, might the Montenegrins look with wishful eyes from their naked mountains to this fertile *polje* of their forefathers: and, appreciating the urgency of the situation, Prince Nikita was no sooner relieved of the menacing forces of Suleiman Pasha from his southern frontier, than he assembled his battalions and proceeded to recommence the investment and siege of Nicksich.

It was necessary to leave as strong a force as possible with Bozo Petrovich, to watch the frontier near Spuz, where Ali Saib, now reinforced by some of Suleiman's troops, held 18,000 men in readiness for any offensive movement into Montenegro that might be ordered from Constantinople. Nor was it possible yet to withdraw any of the forces from the western side, which was still threatened by Hafiz Pasha, the successor here of Mehemet Ali. The Prince had therefore with him to recommence the siege of Nicksich only the men with whom he had previously invested the place, and a portion of the force which had served with Vukotich.

With only these forces at his command, and his extremely limited supplies of efficient artillery, the Prince could do little more than weary out the garrison by encouraging them to expend their ammunition uselessly, and by preventing them obtaining fresh supplies of it or of provisions. The taking of Nicksich, had Prince Nikita possessed anything like an adequate force, would have been a very easy matter, for there were really no fortifications capable of withstanding modern siege artillery and the assault of two or three thousand determined men. The town stood about the middle of the plain to which we have referred. Around it at various distances, and perched on small elevations, were blockhouses or forts, some of which would necessarily have to be taken before much impression could be made on Nicksich itself. A central building, older and larger than any of the outlying works, being rather a fort constructed after the middle-age prescription—two or three square towers with a curtain and covered ways—was known as the Citadel. The garrison, composed of a battalion of Nizams and another of natives of the town, numbered about 800 men, who between them had to hold the Citadel and the eight kulas, or

strong blockhouses, of which three entered into the defence of the city. Besides these there was a series of open redoubts of loose stone on the summit of a range of rocky hills (called gravitzas) to the west of the Citadel, and on a gravitza, called Petrova, to the south-east. A commanding hill to the east, Trebieshka, was only held by a picket, being too far distant, and too large to be otherwise occupied by the small force of which the commander, a Hungarian named Miralai, could dispose.

The Trebieshka gravitza was captured by a surprise on the night of the 22nd July, and on the 19th of August Tjadjalitza and a position in advance of the principal Turkish redoubt were taken by assault, with a loss of eight killed and twenty wounded. From this date matters were quiet until the arrival, on the last day of August, of some Russian guns which had been landed at Castelastua, and had been hurried up to Nicksich, apparently with the tacit consent of the Austrian authorities at Cattaro. The new guns were stationed at the Umaz Rocks (two 30-pounders on one, two 12-pounders on the other), and an active bombardment was at once commenced, directed on Hassan Djedin Grob kula. The second day the 30-pounders were carried to Trebieshka and the kula demolished, assaults being made on that work and on Petrova gravitza the second night about nine o'clock, both being carried after the Montenegrin manner, with a rush and without firing. From this position the besiegers were able to prepare, unobserved, their attack on the redoubt of Musevich, the southernmost of the western range. The taking of this redoubt made the holding of some others impossible, as the Musevich was the highest of the range and the nearest the Citadel. The commandant had, therefore, no choice but to withdraw the troops from these redoubts, which were immediately occupied by the Montenegrins. The possession of Petrova gravitza placed the Montenegrins within pistol-shot of the nearest houses of the city, and that of Musevich gave them easy command of the open batteries of the Citadel, which was now under a cross fire of artillery from three directions, and of musketry at 300 yards from another, working of the guns being, of course, rendered impossible.

The city was thus left entirely defenceless, and if the resistance had been prolonged the houses would have been assaulted and taken one by one.

The panic of the population was great, and consideration for the lives of the townspeople made it obligatory on the commandant to abandon resistance if he could obtain favourable terms. Accordingly, on September 8 a flag was sent to the Prince to treat. But considerations even more imperative than care for the citizens compelled the Turks to accept whatever terms were offered. The supply of rifle cartridges only sufficed for a half hour's fire, and powder for the cannon during the past two days had been only obtained by breaking up old pistol and musket cartridges, and of this only enough remained for a few hours' fire with shot for five guns!

An unconditional surrender was therefore agreed to, but the Prince generously offered to allow the garrison to march out with arms and baggage, and go to whatever point on the frontier might be chosen. The majority elected to make for Gatschko, while most of the Mahometan civilians, nearly all of whom left the place, made their way for Spuz and Podgoritza. The most ample offers of protection and liberties—even to that of carrying arms—were made by Prince Nikita to induce civilians to stay; and not the slightest attempt at violence, plunder, or spoliation was made by the victorious Montenegrins on their entry into the city. Such kindly feeling, in fact, was at once established between the conquerors and the conquered that no one could have imagined he was in a captured city. Equality before the law, however, seemed to be the one thing the Turks would not accept—preferring, apparently, poverty and exile, and the loss of house and land, to remaining in a place in which they could no longer feel themselves the ruling power. Whether this was the precise motive, or whether orders from Spuz forbade the Mahometans remaining, an exodus was clearly determined upon. All were accordingly allowed to depart freely who chose, the Montenegrins in most instances supplying horses and guards.

The capture of Nicksich afforded Montenegro a most acceptable acquisition in the shape of artillery, there being among the *matériel* surrendered a complete battery of 12-pounder steel rifled breech-loading field guns, some heavy bronze rifled guns, and some old smooth-bores—in all, twenty-one guns. There were also numerous other military stores, and enormous quantities of provisions.

The fall of the fortress was beyond doubt one of the greatest events in the history of Montenegro. It had been the chief bone of contention between Turk and Montenegrin for more than three centuries, and there had been during that time five unsuccessful sieges. The news of its capture was therefore received at Cettinge with an exuberance of enthusiasm never before witnessed in the Black Mountain. It was the wild, reckless delight of so many children, and was inconceivable in a civilized country. The people thronged along the street, firing and cheering as they went; the wounded were helped from the hospitals, and came out on crutches to take part in the rejoicing; the great bells of the tower and monastery pealed forth; circles were formed, the Metropolitan of Montenegro assisting, and a strange barbaric war dance was performed in the centre by pairs of warriors, who at the conclusion embraced and kissed one another. Crowds continually broke forth into national songs and hymns, interrupted by salvoes of cannon, to proclaim the joyful news to the other hills and villages, till the whole Black Mountain echoed with the warlike chorus of victory.

Relieved from the attentions which Nicksich had so long demanded, the Montenegrin forces proceeded up the Duga Pass, encountering but trifling opposition from the various Turkish block-houses. That of Presjeka, where the Pass opens at its southern end into the Nicksich plain, surrendered on September 14, and that of Zlostap, at the other end, on the 19th; and the various intervening blockhouses having been already taken, the whole of the pass was thus appropriated by the Prince. The fortress of Bilek gave some trouble to the Montenegrins; but the speedy capture of the Duga forts generally, although they were well provisioned and could have held out for months, was the first fruits of the wise and conciliatory terms granted by Prince Nikita to Nicksich. In the old days, when Montenegrins and Turks gave no quarter on either side, and when the capture of a town was followed by the massacre of its inhabitants, the besieged on either side fought with desperation for dear life. But the garrisons of the Duga forts, amongst whom were Turkish soldiers who had been allowed to march out of Nicksich arms in hand, had no such

motives to prolong resistance. They therefore only demanded and accepted honourable terms, and were allowed to march off, retaining their arms, like the garrison of Nicksich.

In the complete subjugation of the pass and the capture of several towns about its northern entrance, it was evident that important political, quite as much as military, considerations led to this determination on the part of Prince Nikita, sufficient proof of this being the fact that the territory occupied and held by the Montenegrin forces on the Herzegovina side exactly corresponded with the line of demarcation fixed in the autumn of 1876 by the International Commission, and which was likewise proposed and accepted by the preliminary Conference at Constantinople as the rectification of the frontier line which might eventually be given to Montenegro. This comprised the districts of Banjani, of Nicksich, with the Duga Pass up to Kristach, of Piva and Drobniak. Some amount of moderation, indeed, appears to have been displayed here by the Prince, inasmuch as, considering the small Turkish force on the Herzegovina side, much more valuable territory seemed within his reach. He resisted the temptation, however, stopping short at the line drawn by the preliminary Conference.

In the southern quarter the Conference referred to had not been quite so liberal as on the Herzegovinian side. Here, however, Spuz and Podgoritza impinged upon the frontier in much the same wedge-like manner as Nicksich in the north; and a rectification of the frontier in this direction was held to be eminently desirable, the territory to be acquired being to Montenegro as valuable as the plain of Nicksich. It was not only fertile and well watered, but it commanded access to a large part of the coast of the Lake Scutari, with its prolific fisheries. In the direction of Antivari, moreover, the long wished-for access to the sea might probably be found without offending Austrian susceptibilities; and the temptation to undertake these operations became the greater as Turkey found it necessary to withdraw nearly all its really effective troops for the campaign in Bulgaria. Remembering, however, that these matters are apart from our main theme, we here take leave for the present of the Black Mountain.

CHAPTER XXII.

Preparations for crossing the Danube—Lessons of History—Contemporary Speculations—Position assumed by Roumania—Strategic Considerations—The Disposition of the Russian Forces—Orders by the Commander-in-chief—Delay in the Concentration of the Army—Reconnaissance, and construction of a Bridge at Brahilov—Actual crossing of the Danube at Galatz by General Zimmerman—The conflict at Boujak—Decoration of officers by the Russian Emperor and visit to the wounded—Further crossing from Brahilov—Defeat of the Turks at Matchin and reception of the Russian General—Entry into Hirchova—Depredations by the Christian Inhabitants—Retreat of the Turks, and Russian march on Tchernavoda—Scenes on the March—Evening Hymn in the Russian Camp—Trajan's Wall and the Kustendji Valley—Continued Retreat of the Turks—Occupation of Kustendji by the Russians at the solicitation of the Inhabitants—Inactivity of General Zimmerman—Preparations for Crossing the Danube by the Grand-duke Nicholas—Official Hesitation and changes of Plan—Dispositions of the Russian Army immediately prior to the Crossing—The Secret well-kept—The Danube at Simnitza, and the Turkish preparations at Sistova—The Russian March from Simnitza—Launch of the pontoons and Passage of the River—Reception by the Turks and Losses of the Russians—Retreat of the Turks—Sistova occupied by General Dragomiroff—Appearance of a Turkish Monitor at Simnitza—Needless alarm of the Russians—Russian pontoons and the Turkish Batteries at Nikopol—Arrival of the Czar at Simnitza, and visit of his Majesty to Sistova—Imperial Address to the Bulgarians—Appointment of a Russian Governor-general of Bulgaria—Construction and description of the Bridge at Simnitza—Reception of the Russians by the Bulgarians—Pillage of Sistova by the Christians—Bombardment of Rustchuk—Destruction of the European Consulates—Turkish fire on Giurgevo—Disposition of the defending forces at Sistova—Concentration of Turks at Tirnova—Russian Advance—Tirnova—Flight of the Turks—Arrival of the Grand-duke at Tirnova—Advance of General Gourko on the Balkans—Bombardment and Capture of Nikopol by the Russians—Surrender of the Garrison—Importance of the Town to the Invaders.

THE arrival of the Czar at the Russian headquarters in Roumania—described in Chapter XIX.—had long been looked forward to as the epoch at which the army would make a definitive attempt to cross the Danube, and the invasion of Bulgaria be actually commenced. But the difficulties which had been encountered in consequence of the deluge of rain, the violence of the floods, and the deficiency of employés and rolling-stock on the only line of railway, combined to hinder the movements of the army, and particularly of the transport of siege artillery, parks of pontoons, material for bridge-building, and of provisions of all kinds; so that the troops did not reach their appointed places of meeting until several days after the dates fixed.

The Russians recognized the necessity of bringing up their whole force before attempting what had always been a hazardous undertaking. History was not without its lessons. Prior to the campaign of 1877, nineteen times within 100 years the Russian forces had crossed the Danube with hostile intent. Three times the passage was effected at Turtukai, three times at Hirchova, and three times at Ismail. Twice the river was crossed at Gladova, twice at Galatz, twice at Brahilov, while once only were troops brought across at Gosobal, once at Tchernavoda, once at Silistria, and once at Satunovo. The first occasion on which the Rus-

sian forces crossed to the right bank of the Danube was during the campaign of 1773. An armistice had been arranged in 1772; but peace could not be concluded. Accordingly, by the express desire of the Empress Catherine, it was determined to lead the Russian army across the river. The Turks had strongly garrisoned the fortresses of Rustchuk, Silistria, and Shumla, had posted troops of observation at every point of passage, and held strong reserves in readiness in rear. Nevertheless, General Suvaroff succeeded in transporting 700 men across the river at Turtukai during the night between the 9th and 10th of May, 1773, defeating and putting to flight 4000 irregular Turkish troops stationed there. On the 27th of the same month Suvaroff was followed by General Weismann, while, at the same time, General Potemkin succeeded in capturing Hirchova, and in establishing there a second passage across the river. Screened by these detachments the main Russian army, under General Rumanzoff, crossed over the Danube at Gosobal, about twenty miles below Silistria, and advanced to the attack of this latter fortress. Every effort to take it was, however, in vain; and disheartened by his want of success, the Russian general fell back again across the river. In the autumn, at the earnest instance of the Empress, he recrossed to the right bank, and penetrated into Bulgaria as far as the Balkans. In the following year, 1774,

the Danube was again crossed by Russian forces, this time early in April, by General Kamienski, at Ismail. During the same month General Suvaroff effected a passage at Tchernavoda, and General Glaboff crossed over in the vicinity of Silistria. The next attempt to carry Russian forces across the Danube was made by Miloradovitch, who sought to capture Giurgevo by storm in March, 1809. The attack failed, as did also a like enterprise undertaken by Prosorovski against Brahilov. Still the Emperor Alexander insisted that the river should be crossed; and, accordingly, General Isajeff passed over to the right bank at Gladova to assist the Servians. This latter place was stormed. Again the assault was unsuccessful, and again the Russians were fain to fall back to their own side of the stream. In the meanwhile Prosorovski had been superseded in his command on the Lower Danube by Prince Bagration; and the latter succeeded, in August, 1809, in crossing the river near Galatz, and the Turks offering no resistance, possessed himself of Isakchi, Tultscha, Matchin, Hirchova, and finally also of Ismail. Silistria, on the other hand, withstood every attempt to capture it until, owing to the difficulty of providing subsistence for the besieging forces, it became necessary, late in the year, once more to withdraw the Russian army across the Danube. At the opening of the campaign in the following year, 1810, the new Commander-in-chief of the Russian forces, Count Kamienski II., conveyed his army of 25,000 men and seventy-two guns across the river at Hirchova between the 10th and 14th of May. On the 25th of the same month General Sass crossed in boats at Turtukai, and seized that town; and on the 30th Count Zukatto also passed over the river to the north of Widdin. In the following years, 1811 and 1812, the Russian armies constantly crossed and recrossed the river. Hirchova, strongly fortified and garrisoned by the Russians, served them as a *tête de pont* on the Turkish side of the river, and a bridge was also established and maintained at Turtukai. At the outset of the campaign of 1828-29 the Russians, crossing the Pruth in three columns on the 7th of May, reached the Danube on the 8th of June. The 3rd Corps was to cross the river at Satanow, to the eastward of Isakchi; the 7th Corps was to pass over at Brahilov; while the 6th, traversing Wallachia, was to cross the Danube

in the neighbourhood of Turtukai. The 6th Corps arrived at the river without having encountered any serious opposition in its passage through Wallachia; but every effort made by it to effect a passage across the Danube at Turtukai was in vain. The 3rd Corps was more successful at Satanow, and on the 8th of June a bridge was established there; while the 7th Corps, having been delayed by the necessity of besieging and capturing Brahilov, did not succeed in crossing the river until after the capitulation of that place on the 17th of June. The passage of the Danube was also made during the Russo-Turkish War of 1853-55. On the 20th of March, 1854, 12,000 Russian troops were assembled at Brahilov, under the command of Prince Gortschakoff himself; 21,000 more were at Galatz, under Lüders; and 14,000 were at Ismail, under Utschakoff—all in readiness to cross the river. On the 21st of March the last-named general succeeded, despite unfavourable weather, in crossing the Kilia arm of the Danube in boats from Ismail. On the 23rd General Lüders' troops were transported to the right bank from Galatz, while Gortschakoff, having established a bridge of boats, moved his force across on the 26th of March.

Students of history attached more or less importance to the foregoing events, as indicating some of the probabilities of the efforts which the Russians were to put forth in 1877. The operations were of a nature and magnitude to attract great interest. Between the belligerents flowed the largest river in Europe, varying in width, throughout that portion of its length with which we are concerned, from 760 yards to 2180 yards; the rise and fall being extremely capricious, especially at that season of the year, and the depth so variable and altering in so short a time as to puzzle its smartest pilots. To cross such an obstacle in the face of an enemy was a task that would tax to the utmost the skill and energy of all concerned under the most favourable circumstances; but the Russians, on the contrary, found them most unfavourable. The northern banks were so low and swampy as to form a series of pestilential, fever-breeding marshes; the islands in the channel of the river were all situated so near the northern bank as to be of little service to an invader; while, on the other hand, the southern bank was raised high above the water, and therefore admirably fitted for defence. Further,

to effect a crossing successfully it had to be executed suddenly, in large numbers, and, if possible, before a sufficient concentration could be made by the troops on the other side. Such a movement might, if the invader's numbers were sufficient, be materially assisted by feints at other places, by secrecy as to the real point of crossing up to the last moment, and by lateral communications parallel with the river, or by good roads from the rear, by which a constant flow of fresh troops might be brought up to sustain the attack. Since the lateral communications were singularly bad on the northern bank of the Danube, the other methods were those only that could be adopted. Herein lay the first of Russia's difficulties. Where and when she would cross was a secret which it was all-important should be maintained, since the success of the campaign must to a large extent depend thereon. Speculation upon the spot to be selected was greatly at fault, because, whatever might be surmised, nothing was actually known of what was really Russia's objective point. The best contemporary critics held that Russia's aim would be attained if she could successfully fight her way as far south as Adrianople, further than which it was supposed she dared not go without incurring the intervention of some of the European Powers.

The position assumed by Roumania was of great advantage to the Russian commanders. As described in a previous chapter, after some hesitation a mutual understanding was arrived at between the two countries, and the resources of Roumania were placed at the disposal of the Russians, with permission to make use of all existing roads, railroads, rivers, ports, and telegraphs, and with power to complete all unfinished railways. Material was to be provided them for boats, ships, and bridges, and, moreover, their wounded were to be cared for in Russian hospitals erected in their most populous towns, Bucharest excepted. These terms were exceedingly favourable to Russia, and at one time it seemed doubtful whether, after the action of Roumania, Servia might not also be disposed to allow the Russians to cross into her territory. The route would have been more tedious, but then the Balkans might have been turned, with only two or three fortresses left to oppose the march of the Russians on Adrianople. It would, however, have been next to impossible for Russia to have risked such an undertaking

without Austria had given her absolute guarantees of lasting friendship; and there seemed to be a firm resolve on the part of Austria to look thoroughly well after her own interests.

Considerations from a strategic point of view also offered themselves as to where would be the proper place for the army to cross the river. In military affairs it is always assumed that no position is advantageous where either party is forced to fight on a front parallel to, or in the prolongation of, his communications; or more shortly, where he may be compelled to form front to a flank. The reason why an army in such a position is unfavourably situated is simply that a successful flank attack by an enemy not so placed, made upon the flank nearest to the communications, would cut that army so attacked from his line of operations. It may be mentioned that to place an army in such a position, forcing him to fight with his front to a flank, has been an aim of all skilful generals, and was a favourite manœuvre of the great Napoleon. Now, the probabilities seemed that any attempt to cross the Danube along the north of Bulgaria would cause the Russian army, if able to effect a landing at all, to run a risk of being placed in such a position, with the exception of the north-eastern corner, where the river, making one bend northward and another to the east, formed a right angle. The pestilential nature of the portion of the country inclosed within this angle and the sea was so well known, that it had been considered for that reason a most dangerous district to enter; but, setting aside sanitary reasons, and looking alone at the conformation of the frontier line at that point, there could be no doubt that it possessed advantages for assault over any other portion. Remembering that Roumania was a base of operations into which the Russians could move all stores and ammunition with safety, it will be seen that if a simultaneous crossing were made on each side of the angle, to whichever of the two the Turkish army might turn, one of its flanks would become exposed to an assault from the other, while neither of the two Russian corps would have occasion to form with their front to a flank, since their base would in either case be directly in rear of them. Again, the point of attack being made at the end of the Turkish line instead of in the centre, the troops stationed at the other end would certainly be unable to get up in time to take part in the actions

which would immediately ensue, and thus superior numbers might be brought against them. Yet further, this portion of the country was nearest to the Russian communications, and was therefore their most vulnerable point. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary for them in any case to guard it strongly. As a set-off against these advantages there was, as has been stated, the fever-breeding marshes, which might decimate the army more than Turkish bullets, hardly justifying a commander to peril his troops amongst them. There can be no doubt, however, that all the above considerations were well weighed by the Russian commanders, for so far as their operations had as yet proceeded, they had been both discreet and masterly. True it is, their difficulties had not then commenced; but they might have, had not the 11th Corps so rapidly swooped down on the Danube, possessing itself of the railway at Galatz and Brahamlov, and securing the left flank of the Russian line. The importance of this portion of the frontier for offensive warfare has been already commented on. Taking it as a pivot, the Russians had poured their forces into Roumania, and were already wheeling them round to face the Danube.

The disposition of the forces was made with considerable skill. The Grand-duke Nicholas reported to the Emperor, that the 8th Division of cavalry was concentrated along the line of the Aluta to Vede (head-quarters at Turna-Magurelli), on May 19. Lieutenant-general Skobelev was posted along the Vede to Lake Grecilor, with the bulk of his forces; his head-quarters being at Giurgevo on May 20. The 32nd Division of infantry and the 31st regiment of Don Cossacks on May 20 (1st Brigade), and May 25 (2nd Brigade), were at Oltenitza, with his principal force along the line Budesti-Frategi, guarding with Cossacks the stream of the Danube from Lake Grecilor to Ardjis. The 11th Division of cavalry on May 31 was at Obilesto-Nau and Slobodia, with its van at Kalarash, guarding the Danube from Ardjis to Hirchova. The Lower Danube Corps by May 3 had occupied the principal points along the shores of the river Gura-Salomitsa (opposite Hirchova), as far as Kilia, having their reserve at Bolgrad, and their staff at Galatz. The 9th Corps (*minus* the 5th Division of infantry) was concentrated at Slatina on May 30. A detached brigade of Don Cossacks was also at Alexandria on May 18, to form a reserve to the 8th

Division of cavalry. The 12th Division of cavalry (Lieutenant-general Skobelev's *corps de reserve*) on May 15 was at Capaceni, south of Bucharest. The 12th Corps, with a sotnia of Ural Cossacks, and the 37th regiment of Don Cossacks, were posted on May 25 near Bucharest, on the road to Alexandria. The 8th Corps, with the 23rd regiment of Don Cossacks, on May 31 was near Bucharest, on the road to Giurgevo; and a brigade of the 14th Division of infantry at Frategi, to support, in case of need, the corps of Lieutenant-general Skobelev. The 5th Division of infantry and the 34th of Don Cossacks on June 11 was near Bucharest.

The following orders by the Commander-in-chief were then given:—The 14th Corps were to arrive on the 13th of June at Galatz, there to relieve the troops of the 11th Corps, who were to rejoin the 32nd Division of infantry at Oltenitza, and to form, with a detachment of the 7th Corps, the Corps of the Lower Danube, under the command of Lieutenant-general Zimmermann. The 13th Corps had orders to arrive on the 27th of June at Alexandria, to be ready for removal to any point where they might be wanted. The 4th Corps had orders to rejoin and follow the army by rail, according to particular instructions.

On an average the concentration of the army was delayed at least six days. The transport of parks of pontoons and siege artillery by rail suffered the most from delay. The Danube had overflowed its banks with greater force and for a longer period than usual, and the waters only abated slowly. On the Lower Danube they were in the beginning of June fifteen feet above their usual level. This necessitated the passage of the Danube, which had been originally fixed for the 6th of June, being postponed from day to day; and up to the very last moment the Russians had to contend with nature to an extent on which they could scarcely have calculated.

The concentration of the troops having at last been effected, and the river having sufficiently abated, a *reconnaissance* was made, and orders were given for crossing into the Dobrukscha. Many circumstances favoured this movement. On the Lower Danube torpedoes had been laid at the commencement of the campaign, so as to prevent Turkish vessels from entering, either by the principal arm or by the canal of Matchin. This operation succeeded wonderfully, and by the end

of May all the Lower Danube, from Reni to Hirchova, was free of Turkish vessels. Owing to this the Russians were able to construct a bridge from Brahilov to Getschit without let or hindrance. This bridge was composed of rafts, made of large round spars lashed together longitudinally; other logs being laid crosswise upon them, to which in their turn were lashed another layer of longitudinal logs. Upon this was raised the platform of planks which constituted the roadway, and which was sufficiently wide to permit the passage of six men abreast, and strong enough to support cavalry and artillery. As each raft was finished it was towed up the stream to its position, and attached to its fellow raft until the long line had been completed.

General Zimmermann, chief of the 14th Army Corps, held command of the left wing of the Russian forces on the Danube, and to him was committed the duty of making the first crossing into the enemy's territory.

The Grand-duke Nicholas had appointed the 22nd of June for the passage, but the waters were so high along the lower course of the river that General Zimmermann considered it impossible to cross on the day fixed, and begged leave to postpone the operation till the waters had abated. The orders, however, were reiterated that it was indispensable his army should cross without fail on the 22nd of June, and the General made every effort to compass the dangerous operation. Having collected a large number of boats and barges of all kinds and sizes at Galatz (the men and horses crossed in flat boats, while the cannon were taken across on barges), General Zimmermann suddenly left Brahilov, where he had hitherto kept his head-quarters, and proceeded to Galatz. He had a sufficient number of boats to carry over about 1800 men at a time; and at daybreak on the 22nd of June that number of troops was embarked, and started across on the perilous adventure. The distance to be traversed was nearly three miles, and when the southern bank was finally reached it was found that the edge of the water was a mere marsh overgrown with reeds and rushes. The Russians had kept the matter as secret as possible, and hoped that the boats might cross two or three times before the Turks received warning; but the latter had apparently obtained information of the projected movement, and when the first boat-load of Russians arrived they were met with a warm reception. The

first soldier who stepped from the boat was killed. The Turks, who numbered about 3000 men, exclusive of a detachment of cavalry, were posted on a narrow range of hills near the village of Boujak, in front of the spot which the Russians had chosen; and as soon as they came within range the Turks opened upon them a well-directed musketry fire, and after a few moments a couple of pieces of artillery were brought to bear upon the advancing force. The Russians were protected by thick plank bulwarks that had been constructed on the sides of the boats; and it was not until they began to disembark, and wade through the water knee-deep, that the fight became a close and desperate one. The first 1800 Russians who arrived were obliged to maintain themselves against superior numbers, until the return of the boats with a second detachment. They sought shelter wherever they could find it, by advancing part of the way up the heights and taking cover behind rocks, and otherwise availing themselves of every advantage which the ground offered. The Turks kept up a steady and determined resistance, charging their foes with the bayonet; and the fight became a close and a hot one, though the numbers engaged were small on both sides. Several Russians were killed and wounded by bayonet thrusts; and the two or three hundred Turkish cavalry charged, and succeeded in isolating and surrounding an advanced detachment of some fifteen or twenty Russians, whom they cut off to the last man.

As soon as the boats arrived with reinforcements the tide of battle began to turn, and the Turks, from acting upon the offensive, were obliged to defend themselves. Altogether two regiments, or about 6000 Russians, crossed over in the morning, with four pieces of artillery; and the Turks, outnumbered, soon began to give way. The Russian artillery, however, proved to be useless, owing to the nature of the ground, which was so marshy that it was impossible to bring the cannon into action until it was no longer needed. The Russians began to push the Turks hard, and climbing up the heights on both sides, soon succeeded in carrying them. The Turks retreated to the next hill, and again made a stand, and they were again pursued by the Russians; until, after driving them from hill to hill, they gained the heights above Zizila, where the combat ceased at three p.m., the Turks retreating to the heights before Matchin.

Altogether the crossing had been conducted with great daring, and General Jugoff, who commanded the expedition, was decorated with the Cross of St. George by the Emperor himself, who—with the Czarewitch, and the Grand-dukes Vladimir, Alexis, and Sergius—arrived at Galatz in the afternoon, and visited the temporary military hospital and the mansions in which the commanders of the 1st Brigade and the 18th Infantry Division were lying. These officers were wounded in the engagement with the Turks after crossing. The Emperor addressed the wounded with great tenderness, and personally bestowed the decoration of the fourth class of the Order of St. George upon Lieutenant Elsner, of the 69th Riazan regiment, who was the first officer to reach the Turkish bank of the river.

The Turks suffered somewhat heavily in the struggle. The Russian loss was officially given as three officers and forty-one men killed, two officers and ninety-six men wounded.

The crossing from Galatz was a kind of prelude to the main movement at Brahilov. On the same night, June 22, under the protection of the Russian batteries at Getschet, the bridge over the Danube at Brahilov was begun. The end of the line of rafts highest up the river being let go, the current quickly swung the line across the stream, and enabled the troops on the Turkish bank to secure the end at liberty, and, by making it fast, thus complete the work of bridging the river. In order also to enable the troops to pass over the marshes, trestles were laid down which effectually prevented the invading army from sinking in the mire: 2000 Cossacks and four pieces of artillery at once passed without resistance. Near the end of the bridge lay the fortress of Matchin, upon which the Turks had retired after the affair at Boujak. The Turks were at once attacked in front by the force which had come from Brahilov, and in the rear by the troops which had been sent from Galatz and had gone inland. This prompt action of the Russians compelled the Turks to continue their retreat; and the invaders entered Matchin on the 23rd of June, the Turks having evacuated the place without striking a blow. The town was indifferently fortified with old walls, peppercorn flanking turrets, and crenellated curtains which had not wholly crumbled into the moat; but it had no pretensions to a place of strength in the modern acceptation of the term. There were

also a few batteries about it, which were armed with large but obsolete smooth-bore cannon.

General Zimmermann met with a hearty welcome from the Christian residents of the town, who, in a procession headed by their priests, met the Russians on the outskirts with banners and sacred pictures, and presented them with offerings of bread, salt, and a Bible, meanwhile singing songs in praise of the Russians. Each priest held in his hand a small wooden cross. The Russian general and officers took off their caps and kissed the crosses, while the priests sprinkled them with holy water, and the people cheered.

The town of Hirchova was reached without firing a single shot. It is situated on the right bank of the Danube, about twenty miles above Brahilov, where the Russian bridge across the Danube was constructed. On two former occasions Russian armies had crossed the river at Hirchova itself. In 1809 a bridge of boats was established there, and again in July, 1828, while part of the 6th Russian Corps remained in Wallachia to keep Widdin, Rustchuk, and other fortresses in check, General Loth, with a strong detachment, marched along the left bank of the Danube as far as Hirchova, and crossed over the river there in boats. Warned by the successful passage of the Russians in 1809, Hirchova had been fortified by the Turks in 1822; but the works then constructed were not strong. The fortifications originally thrown up consisted of an *enceinte* of five short bastioned fronts, without outworks. The ditch was dry, fourteen or fifteen feet deep, with a revetted escarp and counterscarp. A considerable space at the very foot of the *enceinte* was, however, completely hidden from the guns of the fortress, and the ramparts were commanded from neighbouring heights. An attempt was afterwards made to remedy this latter defect by throwing up high traverses; but although much labour was expended upon them, the works by no means answered the purpose for which they were designed.

The town is divided into two villages—one lying on each side of a rocky height which rises out of the Danube. The lower village was inhabited by Christians alone, and was called Varosh; the upper one was the Turkish section, and much the larger and better situated quarter. The latter village disclosed a scene of utter ruin and desolation. In all the town, which had

sheltered some 8000 inhabitants, not a single house was left untouched; every one was hacked and hewn in a most wanton manner. Everything was cut and knocked to pieces, and made completely unserviceable. The mosque was defiled, the symbols torn and scattered about the floor, the lamps broken, and in the little graveyard some of the ornamented headstones had been broken, and many graves opened.

General Zimmermann made careful inquiry to discover the perpetrators of this mischief, and soon learned the truth, which was, that while the Turks had possession not the slightest damage was done; but after the troops departed the Christian population turned out *en masse*, and spent days in destroying everything in the town. Thinking to appease somewhat the wrath of the General, a deputation of natives marched to his quarters bearing the symbols of hospitality, bread and salt, and offered them to him. The General, however, severely reprimanded the deputation, first in Russian and then in German; and the procession, headed by the priests, went away crestfallen, bearing the tokens with them. Immediately after came a delegation from a neighbouring village on a similar errand, and as no complaint had been made against these, their offering was received.

The Turks continued to retire before the invaders, who, having been reinforced by half of the 4th Corps, now numbered nearly 40,000 men—with communications open at several points upon the Danube. Leaving Hirchova, General Zimmermann proceeded cautiously in the direction of Tchernavoda. The march to the latter town was thus graphically described by an eye-witness, who accompanied the troops. "We saw," he says, "the infantry moving forward in solid masses in the grain field on each side of the artillery, which occupied the road; a half-mile away in the fields, right and left, were Cossack pickets, and at about a quarter the distance infantry men deployed as skirmishers in small squads moved along with precision. Behind the last battery came the quaint, interesting, very picturesque waggon train in a double line, at least three miles long; the square boxes of ammunition carts, tiny troikas on wooden springs, public carriages from Brahilov, campaigning waggons of rich officers, ambulances, and the heavily laden carriages of the nurses of the Red Cross, carts of hay drawn by oxen,

donkeys with pack-saddles, bullocks carrying soldiers' blanket rolls on their horns, infantry men, Cossacks, officers and privates, all moving along in no apparent order, and yet with rapidity and in silence. Although the day was warm, and the advance hurried, there was little falling out of the ranks, and no straggling. At eleven o'clock we halted in a deserted town in a beautiful little valley behind a great hill that runs along east and west for miles. Between the village and this hill is a broad plateau of large extent, and here encamped the army, leaving the train to occupy the village. Cossack outposts dotted the horizon on all sides, the camp guard was stationed in the grain fields at the foot of the hill, and part of the battery was stationed to command the road. In the evening the army was drawn up for the evening hymn, which is always sung at sundown. The soldiers stood there on parade, with their white caps under their arms, singing in chorus the sweet vesper hymn, with an interlude from the bands and bugles. A more impressive sight I have never witnessed; the long lines of men without their accoutrements standing in reverential silence while the bands played a strain, and then joining in the chorus with solemn earnestness—the twilight hour, the presence of the enemy, the grand lines of the encircling hills, all made it a scene ever to be remembered. After the hymn, orders were read that the dark uniforms were to be put on, and that they were to be ready to advance at daybreak; and that if any firing was heard in the night, they were to lie still and await the bugle call. Every soldier in the camp knew that a battle was expected, and in an hour the whole camp was asleep. The next morning, when the sun awoke me, blazing upon my face, the hillside to the south was already black with troops, moving in exactly the same order as on the day before. Soon overtaking the mass of the advance, I found them in order for immediate attack—ambulances all prepared, covers off the guns, not a white coat or a white cap visible. When we reached the summit of one hill, the Cossack scouts already occupied the ridge ahead of us. In a few minutes the staff was assembled about a little tumulus on the highest point of the hills to the front, beyond which could be seen the Turkish camp. Before the battery in advance had reached the foot of the hill I was with the staff at the tumulus, and could look over the

entire field. Never was there such a grand theatre for the observation of military movements. The tumulus overlooked the country fifteen miles east and west; below us a little valley with a green marsh, and at various points small groves of willow trees. Directly opposite on a corresponding summit lay the Turkish camp, apparently perfectly quiet; a little to the left the grey roofs of Medjidie clustered near the largest marsh, with the white minaret of the mosque and one or two painted buildings shining out brightly against the monotonous mud colour of the town. Across the marsh from the village could be distinguished the line of the railway, the little station, and a double grain house. On the extreme right in the distance among the hills was a blue sheet of water, a lake into which flows the stream in the valley before reaching the Danube; and following this stream half way up the opposite slope, a long line of mounds like an earthwork, that had been cut through at intervals, was almost the only break in the smoothness of the grassy flanks of the great ridge. This we knew to be Trajan's Wall, the spot where we had expected vigorous resistance; and, indeed, the quiet in the Turkish camp looked very much like it now. The position they held is a wonderful one, protected as it is in the front by the marsh, which is impassable except by the *chaussée* crossing at the railway, scarcely wide enough for two teams to pass, and two other narrow roads, a mile or two on either side of the town. The heights above it command these approaches, and are also secure against attack from either side, because they take a horse-shoe form toward the valley. As we stood on the tumulus, the hollow behind us, miles in extent, was black with troops, hidden from the enemy by the ridge in front. The left wing occupied the grain fields three or four miles to the eastward, and we could plainly see the movement of single horsemen. At this point was the largest part of the cavalry, under General Schamcheff. We could see them deploying as skirmishers, and moving out in all directions. The pause was long and tedious. Over two hours we waited for the left to get far enough advanced to dash across and try to cut the line; and when, at a quarter before nine o'clock, General Zimmermann gave the order to move on, the black squares of infantry, the rows of large dots which we knew to be artillery, and the bristling bands of Cossacks, *pic* in hand, moved

rapidly up the yellow slope, and disappeared over the crest. At that moment we saw the Turkish camp in confusion—tents were struck, horsemen dashed to and fro, small squads of cavalry galloped over the hills to the west, and others came out upon the causeway in front of us. Fifteen minutes later we could see an artillery train crawl up over the hill, and then gradually the whole camp dissolved, melted away over the crest, and only a squadron of cavalry remained. Away to the left now the Cossacks were already in the fields across the valley, and were advancing towards the hill-top in the rear of the town; the troops behind us moved on the direct road, and also branched off in a large detachment to our right, where the cannon soon got in position, and sent some shells into the retreating train. In half an hour the Turkish cavalry on the causeway withdrew, rallied on the top of the hill, as five Cossacks galloped across the causeway, and then scampered up the hill. Closely following the five Cossacks came a small squadron, then a battalion of infantry, and a battery accompanied by the staff. The troops poured through the narrow entrance to the causeway, where the stone walls on either side had been pierced for musketry, and without pausing for breath we ran up the steep slope to the spot where less than an hour before had stood the Turkish camp. On the next hill could be seen the rear-guard of the retreat, and a few shells were sent after them. Then down we went into the hot valley, the infantry marching along in solid battalions and keeping well in the ranks, up the next hill, the horses breathing hard, and we who were on foot all out of breath; the rear-guard still in sight, a little further off. Now the road, trampled for many rods on either side by the retreating Turks, began to be strewn with cartridges, overcoats, knapsacks, haversacks, bread, onions, and even shoes, thrown away by the heavily laden soldiers. A Cossack battalion dashed forward with some artillery, and we could see the firing going on just ahead, and hear the report of cannon and musketry. We passed a dead Turkish soldier lying flat on his back in the road, shot through the side; then some overturned carts and quantities of clothing, even several guns. The firing went on a short half mile ahead, and always advanced with rapidity. This went on for two hours, when the infantry, very much wearied by a quick march of thirteen miles in the hot sun, were ordered to halt.

A gentle breeze cooled the air somewhat; but it was broiling on the hill-tops, and no water was to be had there. Soldiers scooped the muddy liquid from a small swamp, and drank it in their eagerness to quench a thirst of hours. When the halt was ordered they lay down at once and rested; the stragglers, of whom there was an astonishingly small number, came up and joined their companies, and in a few moments they were ordered to move, but this time to Medjidie. Meanwhile the Cossacks were having warm work at the front. Four separate times they charged on the rear-guard sabre in hand. The Turkish retreat was in good form for two or three hours, then it became a rapid rout, and at three o'clock pursuit ceased. At short intervals the Turks would pause, throw out tirailleurs, unlimber guns, fire a few rounds, and retire to repeat the same further on. Of about 250 shells only five exploded; perhaps they forgot to put in the fuses as they did at Matchin. The shells fell thickly among the Cossacks, one striking alongside General Schamcheff's horse, and yet only one man was killed and two wounded. Thirty-three Turkish dead were found on the field, and many were carried away with the retreat. That night the army encamped where in the morning the Turkish tents had stood. The baggage came up and quartered in the town; the staff head-quarters occupying the Konak."

The Turks, it was supposed, would have made a stand upon the line of railway which ran a distance of thirty miles from Kustendji to Tchernavoda, across the narrowest part of the neck of the peninsula. The importance and value of this position were perceived by a far greater strategist than Abdul Kerim, the Turkish commander. The Emperor Trajan, who has left so many traces of his presence in this part of Europe, perceived the defensibility of the position, and built two walls across the neck of land, one being some five miles in the rear of the other. The railway nearly follows the line of these walls, and runs along a valley which is actually below the high water level of the Danube. From the Danube swamps extend up the valley fully a third of the distance to Kustendji, thus adding greatly to the defensible character of the position. Upon the southern or Turkish side of the valley the ground rises steeply; and the position could, by a line of well-constructed earthworks, be rendered almost impregnable.

In 1828 the Russians crossed the Kustendji valley without any opposition whatever. The Turkish army, however, was at the commencement of that war completely disorganized. The massacre and disbandment of the Janissaries in 1826 had left Turkey without an army, just as the destruction of its fleet at Navarino in October, 1827, had left her without a navy. She had therefore nothing whatever to oppose to the Russian advance save newly-raised levies, who could only be depended upon to fight under the protection of the guns of fortresses, and who were therefore collected at Silistria, Varna, and Shumla.

In calculating the progress, and in estimating the prospects of the campaign of 1877 by comparison with the events of that of 1828-29, it must be borne in mind, that although Russia was much more powerful in 1877, the difference between the Turkish forces of 1828 and 1877 was enormously greater than in her case. Russia had an army three times stronger; but Turkey's strength by land had increased fivefold, besides the immense advantages which the command of the sea gave her. In 1828 Hirchova, which is situated about thirty miles from Tchernavoda, and forty-five from Matchin, offered no resistance, and yet the Russian army took a fortnight to traverse these seventy-five miles.

The Turks held the line of railway from Kustendji to Tchernavoda with the whole of the troops destined for the defence of the Dobrudscha; but as the Russians advanced the Turkish army was withdrawn. When General Zimmermann entered Tchernavoda, and established his headquarters there, the Turks retreated towards Varna, leaving Kustendji defenceless.

The occupation of Kustendji by the Russians formed a peculiar incident in the history of the war. The Turkish authorities, civil and military, had evacuated the place, and reported themselves at Varna, where they arrived by steamer. The town in the meantime was kept in some kind of order by the sailors of the British gun-boat *Rapid*, which happened to be in the roads; and a suggestion was made by the officers to a few of the notables of the place to go to Medjidie, twenty miles distant, and invite the Russians to come in. The suggestion was accepted, and a deputation at once left for the Russian camp. Their reception was courteous, and about 200 Russians were thereupon sent by General Zimmermann to occupy

the town. M. Belocherewitz was appointed civil and military governor at Kustendji, a municipality was formed, police patrolled the streets, and public affairs were conducted in the most orderly manner.

From this point, the Turks having left the Dobrudscha entirely to the Russians, General Zimmermann quietly settled down on the Kustendji line, and indulged a "masterly inactivity" for several months.

It is now necessary to return to the main body of the Russian army, which was posted on the banks of the Danube in readiness to effect a crossing in force. Since the days when an Emperor capitulated at Sedan, and a great army went into captivity from Metz, no military event had created so intense an excitement.

The preparations made for crossing were as follows:—Pontoons and other materials of the huge bridge required for so gigantic an undertaking were prepared at Galatz and Slatina. The pontoons constructed at Galatz were transported by rail to Slatina, as it was needful to bring all the pontoons and other means of transport to that town, launch them on the Aluta, and afterwards descend the Danube, passing by the fortifications of Nikopol, because there was no other choice. Except the Aluta, there is no other navigable river falling into the Danube between Nikopol and Sistova. If the Russians had used the river Ardjis they would have had to ascend the Danube, and pass the still stronger fortress of Rustchuk, towing up all their material as far as Sistova; and the Commander-in-chief thought such an undertaking impracticable. The parks of pontoons were transported by rail to the station of Banias (between Bucharest and Giurgevo) and thence by the ordinary route to Beiu. The preparations that had to be made for the passage in the middle of the course of the Danube were unquestionably very difficult. As has been stated, its execution depended mainly upon the railroads, which were inadequate for the task. Secondly, all the Turkish monitors (excepting the two which had exploded at Brahilov) were originally in this part of the stream, which made the establishment of a network of torpedoes an extremely difficult and dangerous enterprise. The vigilance of the Turks had also been awakened, and at several points they erected works of defence. At Nikopol, for

instance, there were, in the beginning of May, when the Russian troops arrived, but two detached works; in the beginning of June they had been increased to thirteen. For a whole month the Turks attentively watched the Russians—opening fire whenever a detachment, however small, appeared on the banks, or on any boat that pushed from the shore. But on the approach of the decisive moment their watchfulness appeared to flag, and this circumstance greatly facilitated the final preparations for the passage.

Agreeably to first intentions, the Russian troops marched upon Turna and Flamunda in the following order:—A portion of the 9th Corps (31st Division of infantry and 9th Division of cavalry) from Slatina to Segarcia. The 12th Corps, the 5th Division of infantry (9th Corps), and the Bulgarian Legion marched upon Saltcha; the 5th Division reuniting to their Corps at Segarcia. The 12th Division of cavalry had been left behind by their corps in Vitanesti. The 4th Brigade of riflemen, the 8th Corps, and the parks of pontoons (these latter upon their arrival by rail at Banais), marched to Siaka and Piatra; the Caucasian Cossacks upon Simnitza; the 11th Division of infantry upon Oltenitza and Giurgevo, where they were to rejoin the rest of the 11th Corps; the 13th Corps, forming a general reserve, upon Alexandria; the half of the 4th Corps, which had not joined General Zimmermann in the Dobrudscha, upon a point determined by the Grand-duke, whence they were to remove wherever most needed. All the troops were to be at their posts by the 25th; but in consequence of the delay in the transport of the pontoons the army was stopped on the Vede river, at Rusvede, Alexandria, and Beiu. Thence the army, with equal facility and promptness, could be sent to Turna, Simnitza, and Giurgevo, as circumstances might require. The time occupied by the troops in advancing to the Vede was turned to account for laying torpedoes in the Danube and reconnoitring the ground, with a view to the selection of the most advantageous point where the river could be crossed.

The Grand-duke at first intended crossing the Danube at Sistova, but the environs of Simnitza, on the opposite (Roumanian) side of the river, were so inundated that it seemed impossible to think of passing over there; and he therefore considered that, notwithstanding its fortifications, he should have no choice but to cross at Nikopol,

where the Danube has only a bed, with no creeks or windings. From 20th June to the 24th he was secretly away from Ploiesti, with the Chief of the Staff and his adjutant, Major-general Levitzky, reconnoitring the shore from Simnitza to Turna. Having then ascertained the extreme difficulty of attempting to cross the river at Nikopol, he observed that the water was no longer too high to permit the passage at Simnitza, and accordingly reverted to his original intention, and fixed upon this point—somewhat below Sistova. Scarcely any one at headquarters knew where he had gone, or that he was away at all. Nor did the Turks seem to have had any inkling of his inspecting the shore in person; certainly they did not fire. Having selected the point where the river was to be crossed, the Russian commander immediately gave the following orders:—To keep the chosen point a secret from every one except the commander of the 8th Corps, which was to cross first. To conceal the chosen point, he directed the 9th Division of infantry to march from Alexandria to Piatra. The only troops ordered from Beiu to Simnitza were the 14th Division of infantry, the mixed company of the Guards, two companies of pioneers, the 4th rifle brigade, the whole fort and mountain artillery (two batteries, sixteen guns), and all the pontoons. The pontoons were to begin the passage in the night from the 24th to the 25th. The division of the Caucasus Cossacks was commanded to remain at Beiu until further orders. The 12th Corps was commanded to march, not on Saltcha, but on Voijevoda and Kroshkar, by which movement it would get nearer Simnitza. The same route was prescribed to the Bulgarian Legion. The Grand-duke informed the 9th Corps that it would be the first to pass at Flamunda, and that, in consequence, immediately after its arrival at Segarcia it was to march to Siaka, leaving at Turna only a small detachment of infantry, and replacing on the line of the Danube the 8th Division of cavalry by the 9th. The 13th Corps was ordered to proceed from Alexandria to Piatra; the 35th Division of infantry marching in front. Orders were sent to the siege artillery at Giurgevo to bombard Rustchuk daily from the 24th, to open fire on Nikopol on the evening of the 25th, and to continue the bombardment until further orders. Bombardments were also ordered at other positions occupied by the Russians.

The bombardment of Rustchuk, as we shall

describe further on, accordingly commenced on the 24th; and on the evening of the 25th the Russian artillery commenced that of Nikopol, and the Turkish batteries flanking the fortress on either side, and covering the mouth of the Aluta river. The bombardment was incessantly continued on the 26th and 27th. The fire of the Turkish batteries was silenced, and two of them were entirely destroyed. On the 27th Nikopol was set on fire, the conflagration being extinguished only on the morning of the 28th.

The secret of the place of crossing was wonderfully kept. Even the Czar himself did not disdain to bear a part in the mystification. For two days, as his aide-de-camp, Prince Dolgorousky, described the matter, he sat on the top of a hill at Siaka and looked through a spyglass in the wrong direction. It was even reported that his Majesty was deceived like other people; but this was an error, the prevalence of which only showed how excellently the farce was played. The foreign officers and the newspaper correspondents who had attached themselves to the 9th Corps, in perfect confidence that they would be certain of witnessing the crossing, received no hint of the change. The order was even issued for that portion of the corps which was under the commandant, General Krudener, at Siaka, to hold itself in readiness; and as the bombardment of Nikopol was pressed with new vigour, one universal impression reigned that on the night of the 27th the blow would be struck at that place. But upon the Danube bank at Siaka there were no signs of movement. The deception was complete—*le tour joué*. To forestall suspicion, the Emperor denied himself that moment of deepest interest for which he had travelled hither. Not only did he make his presence conspicuous far from the scene of action, he even refused to have messages sent until the operation was fairly begun.

On the evening of the 26th the troops told off for the passage of the river, with their pontoons, were quietly concentrated on the shore near Simnitza. This place is almost opposite the long straggling Turkish town of Sistova, but above it, and in the hollows of a precipice overhanging the Danube. Below Sistova for a distance of two miles the Turkish bank is steep, in places quite precipitous, with here and there little hollows, and above the river side are steep wooded slopes covered with gardens and vineyards, leading to a bare ridge forming the sky-line. Two miles below

Sistova is a narrow, marked depression in the Turkish bank, leading up from a little cove formed by the affluents of a small stream above; and to the right of this cove was a small camp of Turkish soldiers, fixed there doubtless in consciousness of the weakness of the point, and above the camp on the sky-line was a battery of heavy guns. Between the cove and Sistova several cannon were disposed under cover of the trees, and immediately on the right of the town was a small open earth-work armed with a few field guns. Sistova was an open town. Probably in and about it there was not more than a brigade of Turkish troops; but it was not distant more than a long day's march from either Rustchuk or Nikopol. About Simnitztza the Roumanian bank is high, but between it and the Danube proper, which flows close to the Turkish bank, is a broad tract partly of green meadow, partly of sand, partly of tenacious mud, the whole at this time just emerging from inundation. This flat is cut off from Simnitztza by a narrow arm of the Danube, so that it is really an island. A raised road and bridge, leading from the town across the flats to the landing-place on the Danube, had been wrecked by the floods. It was necessary, therefore, for the Russians to gain access to the flats by a short pontoon bridge. These flats were still in many places under water, scored by intersecting streams, and studded with impracticable swamps, so that the road through them was difficult and tortuous. They were quite bare, except that at the lower end, exactly opposite the cove on the Turkish side, there was a wood of willows and alders of considerable extent, and capable of affording a good deal of cover. The Danube all along the Sistova position is about 1200 paces wide, and flows very rapidly. The ground on the Roumanian side shows a sloping face to the higher Turkish bank, so that it was impossible to bring troops into Simnitztza altogether unobserved.

As soon as darkness came on the troops began to move out of the town and over the bridges. But the little bridges so creaked, and the wheels so rattled in passing, that there was serious danger of immediate discovery. For lack of straw some hay was taken from the horses and strewn thickly over the bridges, which then sounded indistinctly, but still enough to be dangerous on a calm night. Across the flat there was no noise, for it consisted of mud and dust. The men were concealed in the

willows which form a close fringe to the bank about a mile eastwards of Simnitztza. The troops were in complete marching order, and for this day they had discarded their cool white clothing, and crossed in their heavy blue uniform. Two reasons were assigned for this: one, the greater warmth to the wounded in case of lying exposed to the night chills; the other, that white clothing was too conspicuous. They also carried food for three days. The first work was to plant in made emplacements a row of field guns all along the edge of the flats, to sweep with their fire the opposite banks. This was while the infantry was being marched over the flats down into the cover of the willow wood.

The darkness and the obstructions were so great that all was not ready till the first glimmer of grey dawn. The pontoons having been launched on the water, the passage was begun under the direction of Major-general Dragomiroff, commandant of the 14th Division of infantry, and Von Richter, commandant of the 3rd Brigade of engineers. At two o'clock a.m. the first convoy of pontoons left the shore carrying the Volhynian regiment, which bears the name of the Grand-duke Nicholas, and sixty Cossacks of the 23rd Don regiment, commanded by Major-general Yolchine. The rowers laid themselves down to their work, and the whole force of boats started in regular line for the opposite shore, at first unperceived. But the distance was considerable, and the powers of the current and men's arms irregular, and so it transpired that many of the boats became separated; and the main landing place, intended to be on a smooth shore and slope, transferred itself by stress of circumstances to a little cove hewn out of the earth by a small stream, with high banks; while other boats only reached the land a mile distant from each other.

As the boats gained the mid stream out of the shelter of the willows, the Turkish watch on the other side began to perceive them, and opened fire. Other infantry hurriedly ran to meet the advancing attack. But no artillery opened as yet against the Russians, nor was their loss great at this time—most of the boats being protected by iron shields. One boat with forty officers and men was, however, pierced and sank; two others with a stage across them, on which were two mountain guns, were so struck by the bullets coming from above that they gradually filled, unknown to the

doomed men they were carrying, and disappeared suddenly. With these exceptions the loss was trifling, and by daybreak 208 boats had made the passage. The men threw themselves into the water, and on to the shore; but were then almost in a *cul de sac*. To climb the steep bank it was necessary in some cases to mount on each other's shoulders, in other cases to make holes in the bank for hands and feet. Little progress was made at this time, and some of that little was in danger of being lost. But as the boats discharged their loads they recrossed the river, and soon returned bearing more men.

The Russian guns at once opened when the Turkish fire commenced. Though taken by surprise, a considerable number of Turkish troops were speedily assembled, and the pontoons carrying the second party were received with a heavy fire of both musketry and artillery. Nevertheless the pontoons went on crossing and recrossing the river incessantly. Five pontoons—three ordinary ones, and two connected by a raft—foundered, being struck by cannon balls. Lieutenant-colonel Strevitzky, commander of a mountain battery, and Lieutenant Von Turber, of the artillery of the Guards, with the men belonging to the two mountain guns, were among the killed. Major-general Dragomiroff crossed with the third convoy, and took the command. The son of the Grand-duke Nicholas, who had been placed at his disposal during the passage, was charged by him with directing the embarkment after he left for the opposite shore, and eventually crossed with the troops of the 14th Division of infantry. On his arrival at the right shore Major-general Dragomiroff discovered that the troops landed by the two first convoys had successfully driven back the Turks, who had retreated about five versts from the water-side. He immediately ordered the brigade of Major-general Petrajchevsty to march upon Sistova, and attack the town. The 4th Rifle Brigade was detailed to occupy the hills skirting the river above Sistova. From three o'clock in the morning till noon the sanguinary fight raged incessantly, the last shots being heard at about two p.m. The Turks defended themselves with the courage of despair, and all their positions had to be taken at the point of the bayonet. Notwithstanding the assistance rendered by the batteries on the Roumanian shore, it required a great effort to silence two guns posted on the hills which

commanded Sistova. At last, however, the Turks withdrew in the direction of Tirnova and Nikopol.

The Turks left no more than about fifty dead upon the field, and about twenty prisoners. It was thought, however, that they carried off some of their dead. The Russian losses, which at first were estimated at about 1000 men, were officially returned as two officers and 291 men killed, twenty-two officers and 446 men wounded, and fifty-three missing. During the whole afternoon, evening, and night the troops kept crossing as quickly as circumstances would permit. The number of boats was augmented in the course of the day to about 300.

General Dragomiroff followed up the retiring Turkish infantry, who fell back in the direction of Rustchuk. Their rear maintained a desultory skirmish till the summit of the heights was reached, and then they ran, pursued for a short distance by the Russians, both infantry and Cossacks, the latter being in but scanty numbers. Just as night fell General Dragomiroff brought up a battery of horse artillery in pursuit, which kept up a brisk fire for some time.

The success of the crossing was due to a great extent to the failure of the Turks in not keeping a good look-out, and to their want of ordinary foresight in not having men enough opposite their enemy's concentrations to prevent a passage without, at least, heavy loss. To say this is not to detract in the slightest degree from the gallantry of the Russian soldiers, nor of their officers, but at such a place as that chosen—with the scattered landing places, and intervening perpendicular bluffs and ravines—the Turks would have been able to repulse the attempts of almost any army to land, if they had adopted proper precautions, and fought with anything like the skill and bravery they displayed on several subsequent occasions.

The camp of the Russian troops was placed on the plateau behind the sky-line of the heights. On the evening of Friday, the 27th June, there were across the Danube three infantry divisions, the 8th, 14th, and 35th, the artillery of two divisions, one brigade of riflemen, two regiments of Cossacks, and miscellaneous detachments. Sistova was occupied on the afternoon of the 27th. A detachment of Cossacks wound up the glen of Jerkir Dere, at the mouth of which was the landing place. It then inclined to the right, scouting along the footpaths, among

the fields and gardens. The strongest detachment crept cautiously westward on Sistova. The leading files first peered into the shattered earthwork, where two dismounted field guns were found, and then gradually felt their way into the town, peering round the corners of streets, and patrolling onward by twos and threes, until, with infinite patient circumspection, they had gone through the whole place. Some few houses, which presented a suspicious aspect, were entered; but the town was found to be almost empty, nearly all the Turkish population having left.

On Thursday the 28th, about noon, the proceedings of the crossing were temporarily interrupted by the sudden appearance of a monitor steaming up the stream. It appears that she worked her way out through the lower end of the channel behind the island of East Mardim, and had run the risk of torpedoes. Puffs of smoke rose from the Russian field battery opposite the western end of that island, and more distant reports betokened the return fire of the monitor. She passed the battery, taking its fire in so doing. Thereupon there was a general rush back from the water's edge to the pontoon waggons. The infantry waiting to cross fell back for cover into the willows. The columns leaving Simnitza reversed their march, and there was something like a stampede of the baggage waggons. The bridge had already been begun, and the monitor might have done incalculable harm. Her smoke drew nearer as she slowly steamed up the stream, until at length she was in the same reach as the crossing place. There she stopped, and there she supinely waited for two hours, neither moving nor firing a shot. The Russians made no attempt to dislodge her; but she inexplicably withdrew of her own accord, steaming away slowly down the river. All this arrested the crossing, the boats huddling up against either bank, and the construction of the bridge being also delayed.

The bridge which the Russians began to construct on June 28 was to have been ready on the 30th. The transport to Simnitza of all the material required for its construction was a trying task, as all the pontoons, rafts, boards, and other requisites had to be brought from the mouth of the Aluta, past Nikopol and its batteries. This exploit was achieved thrice, in the nights of the 27th, 28th, and 29th of June. The first detachment of 100 pontoons was conducted by Captain

Novositsky, who placed himself in the rear. In the first pontoon were Major-general von Depp, the commander of the engineers, with the colours of the 4th battalion of engineers in his hand; Colonel Svistchevsky, the commander of the 5th battalion of engineers; and Lieutenant Lohman, of the Imperial navy. The Turks never perceived the convoys till they had almost passed them; their fire opened too late, and inflicted no damage. The pontoons, once at Flamunda, in the following night were conveyed to Simnitza, under the command of the Grand-duke Alexis Alexandrovitch. The second detachment, consisting of fifty pontoons and thirty-four rafts, commanded by Captain-lieutenant Zouboff, passed Nikopol in the night of the 28th, and the thirty last rafts passed in the night of the 29th.

On Thursday morning, June 28, the Emperor, with the Czarewitch, arrived at Simnitza. His Majesty immediately visited the wounded, who numbered about 400, some being lodged in tents, some in houses. In the afternoon the Emperor crossed the Danube, and went round the troops on Turkish soil, where he was received with tremendous enthusiasm. He found the 9th Division on the left, the Rifle Brigade in the centre, the 8th Division to the right, and the 35th Division in reserve. He embraced General Dragomiroff, hailed him as the head of the crossing (an honour shared by Yolchine and the younger General Skobeleff), and gave him the 3rd class Cross of St. George, the highest honour a division general could obtain. The Brigade Yolchine, as the first to cross, lined the Emperor's road into Sistova, and he addressed his soldiers with a thankful greeting, and with warm praises of their valour. A Bulgarian priest received him at the entrance with a cross, and with bread and salt. After kissing the cross and tasting the bread and salt, the Czar went straight to the Bulgarian Church—the Bulgarian women and children of Sistova strewing his path with flowers—and listened to a *Te Deum*, and took the sacrament. He was urgent for the speedy completion of the bridge, and inspected the progress of construction. In the evening he sent an aide-dé-camp round the hospitals, to distribute thirty crosses of St. George to the most valiant of the wounded.

His Majesty also addressed the following proclamation to the Bulgarians:—

“My troops have crossed the Danube. They

are entering your country, where they have several times already fought for the improvement of the condition of the Christian inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula. Faithful to ancient historical traditions, always drawing fresh force from the old and intimate connection which bound them to the orthodox people of Russia, my forefathers succeeded, through their influence and their arms, in ameliorating the States of Servia and Roumania successively by providing them with a new political existence. Time and circumstances have not changed the sympathies of Russia for her co-religionists in the East. She still cherishes the same affection, the same solicitude, for all the members of the great Christian family of the Balkan Peninsula. I have intrusted to my army, commanded by my brother, the Grand-duke Nicholas, the mission of insuring to your nationality its sacred rights, which constitute the express condition of the peaceful and regular development of all civil existence. These rights you have not acquired by force or armed resistance, but at the cost of centuries of suffering, at the cost of the martyrs' blood which you and your ancestors for ages have shed upon the soil of your native country. Men of the Bulgarian land, the aim of Russia is to construct, not to destroy. She is called upon by the decrees of Providence to pacify and conciliate all races and worshippers in every part of Bulgaria where dwell inhabitants of diverse origin and faith. Henceforth Russian arms will protect all Christians from violence. No injury shall be done them or theirs with impunity. All crimes shall receive punishment. The life, liberty, honour, and property of every Christian shall be equally protected, whatever his faith. Vengeance will not guide us ; the sentiment of strict equity alone prevailing, with the firm determination to introduce progressively order and law in the place of confusion and arbitrary sway. And you Mussulmans of Bulgaria, I have a salutary announcement to make to you. It is painful to me to have to recall the crimes and violence of which several of you have been guilty towards the defenceless Christians. These horrors cannot be forgotten ; but the Russian authorities will not hold you all responsible for the crimes of some of you. Regular and impartial justice will deal only with criminals still unpunished, although their names were well known to your Government. Admit the justice of God, which has now reached

you, bend to His will, submit to the legitimate requirements of the authorities who will be established wherever my troops appear, become peaceful citizens, and society is ready to accord you the benefits of a regular organization of your existence, your property, your life, and honour. Your families we shall regard as sacred. Christians of Bulgaria, you are passing through the memorable days of your deliverance from the arbitrary rule of the Mussulman. Give the world an example of Christian love ; consign to oblivion your internal dissensions, scrupulously respecting the legitimate rights of every nationality ; unite, brothers in religion, in the sentiments of concord and brotherly affection, which alone afford the solid basis of a durable edifice ; rally closely under the shadow of the Russian banner, whose victories have so often awakened the Danube. Bulgarians, wherever the Russian troops advance into the interior of the country, the Turkish power will be replaced by a regular organization ; and the native inhabitants will be at once called upon to participate in it actively, under the high direction of special and new authorities. The Bulgarian legions will serve as the kernel of the local armed force, destined to maintain order and security. The anxiety you testify loyally to serve your country, the impartiality with which you perform the great task which duty has imposed on you, will prove to the world that you are worthy of the fate Russia has been for so many years preparing for you, at the cost of such sacrifices. Obey the Russian authorities, submit faithfully to their directions, for in this lie your strength and safety. I humbly pray to God to give us victory over the enemies of Christianity, and to bless our just cause.

(Signed) "ALEXANDER."

Prince Tscherkassè was appointed Governor-general of Bulgaria, and as each town was subsequently occupied by the Russians a municipal administration was at once organized.

The Imperial head-quarters were established at the Civil Hospital of Simnitza, on the right of the town, and directly opposite Sistova. During their stay an incident occurred which is worthy of record. Whilst the Emperor with his suite were dining, and about the middle of the repast, the strains of the Dead March in "Saul" were heard, for both the hospital and the churchyard, where the wounded who died were buried,

were nigh at hand. The Emperor inquired if that was not the funeral passing of the young artillery officer who was drowned by the foundering of his pontoon during the crossing, and whose body was recovered four days later some distance down the river. Being told that it was he at once rose, and with the Grand-duke and all his suite walked to the church where the funeral service was being performed. He remained during the whole of its performance, lasting for an hour, and then went into the porch, where the grave had been made, and stood by the head of the coffin while it was being lowered into the earth.

As already stated, the bridge over the river, which was begun on the 28th of June, was intended to be ready on the 30th. On Friday night, the 29th, however, there was a storm of wind and rain, when several of the pontoons broke loose, and were lost. The free-board of the iron pontoons was found to be too low, and the water entered them. In consequence of this it was believed at Rustchuk that the Russian bridge of boats had been destroyed by Turkish monitors, as some of the Russian boats were seen floating down the river.

The construction of the bridge was, however, actively proceeded with, and the structure—certainly one of the largest pontoon bridges ever put together for purposes of war—was completed on July 2. Starting from a point on the island of Adda, on the right of the Russian position immediately before the crossing, and in front of the rifle pits west of the right battery, the bridge was carried across to an island overlooked by the cliffs west of the landing cove. In this stretch there were no fewer than 307 pontoons—the distance to which they extended being rather more than a mile. A road had then to be constructed over the soft muddy sand of the island, and in place of taking the way exactly in a line with the bridge, the road led down the stream for a short distance, then across to the shore, where a small bridge of forty pontoons connected this island with another nearer Sistova. The road on the second island led up the stream to a point about two hundred yards above the line of the main bridge, and a third bridge of 180 pontoons connected it with the Bulgarian shore just below the cliffs to the right of the landing cove. A way was also constructed from the cliff to the cove, whence a track winding amongst the broken ground and knolls, but always ascending, led to

the crest of the range of hills which overlooks the Danube. The manner in which the road across the islands before mentioned was constructed is worthy of notice. On either side of the track marked out for the road, a deep, broad trench was dug for drainage purposes, and willows from adjoining thickets were cut, tied up in fascines, or laid with open branches across the track so traced out, and upon the willows and fascines was thrown the sand dug from the trenches. A useful and permanent roadway was thus made. On the bridge itself the carriage way was upheld on trestles made of logs of wood a foot square, and connected from pontoon to pontoon with logs of the same dimensions, and clasped with iron. Every pair of platforms were joined by means of strong bolts and screws, and thus the skeleton track was complete. The road was formed of cross planks two inches thick, many of which were brought on the pontoon trains from Russia, but the majority of the battens used in covering the frame bridge over the wooden pontoons were those intended for the bridge at Nikopol—if the crossing had been effected there, as was at one time contemplated—and were conveyed to Simnitsa in carts. On either side of the track the planks were fastened with others nailed lengthwise, while protection from falling into the river was afforded by means of ropes slung on four-foot poles, which ran the entire length of the bridge. Immediately after the construction of the bridge traction engines were employed on each side of the river to smooth the roads, which, especially on the right bank, were greatly in need of repair.

Although the Turks had monitors at Rustchuk and at Nikopol, no attempt was made to prevent the building of the bridge, or to destroy it after it had been finished.

With regard to the feeling of the Bulgarian people at this time, it may be observed that, as in the Dobrudscha, the Russians were everywhere received with joyful acclamations. The populace hung about them with thanks, and young girls brought them flowers. Another proof of good feeling was to be found in the fact that the houses were readily opened to the victors, and that all who could supply them with food and drink did so, refusing to accept any payment. The languages are so nearly alike, that the Russian spoke in Russian, the Bulgarian in Bulgarian, and they understood each other.

Evidence of the adverse feeling of the Bulgarians towards the Turks was early manifest. Between the period of the flight of the Turks and the entry of the Russian troops into Sistova the Bulgarians sacked and wrecked the Turkish houses, without a single exception. The pillage and destruction were sweeping and universal, as if the place had been sacked by a victorious army after storming. There was not left a whole pane of glass in the window of any Turkish house in the town. The wrecked interiors presented an indescribable chaos of destruction. Cupboards were smashed, floors torn up, shelves torn down, and stoves broken, in search of secreted money. The floors were strewn with miscellaneous *débris* and torn books printed in curious characters. The furniture was broken in sheer wantonness, and the plaster shattered. The divans were broken up; in fine, the ruin was thorough and universal, so far as the interiors of the houses were concerned. Nor was the destruction confined to the habitations. There were eight mosques in Sistova, and all were wrecked. The very railings were broken into small pieces, as if in the keen zest and gloating enjoyment of laying waste. The few Turkish shops and stores were pillaged of everything valuable, and the fixtures of the interiors smashed into fragments. Nothing Turkish in the place escaped the wreck; and the aspect of uninjured dwellings intermingled with others reduced to the extremity of dilapidation was strange and significant. In justice to the Russian soldiery, however, it must be stated that they took no part in these wanton outrages, but on their entry they immediately directed their efforts to stop the pillage.

We have already observed that before attempting to cross the Danube the Russian Commander-in-chief, as a delusive tactic, ordered the bombardment of Rustchuk; and accordingly on Sunday afternoon, June 24, at about half past three o'clock, that town was aroused from its quiet by the Russian batteries between Slobosid and Giurgevo, on the Roumanian side of the river, opening a brisk fire on the shipping collected at the mouth of the river Lom, and upon the town on the Bulgarian side of the river—nine batteries eventually being drawn into the fray.

Rustchuk is one of the most strongly fortified places on the lower banks of the Danube, and forms the north-western defence in the Turkish

Quadrilateral, the series of fortresses of which the Turks are so justly proud. It was not, therefore, to be expected that the Russians would be unanswered for their unexpected attack, and shortly after four o'clock the Turks replied from all their batteries—their cannonade growing more furious as the Russian fire became weaker. The shots from Slobosid were not directed to the forts, but passed over those who were prepared to return the unlooked-for compliment to the centre of the town, which, from its narrow streets and wooden houses, suffered most severely. Whether intentionally or by mistake, the house of the English Consul, Mr. Reade, became a mark for the Russian firing, though the large Union Jack, measuring six yards by three, was promptly hoisted in addition to the small one already flying; the firing continued, and within half an hour the building was a perfect wreck. One shot, exploding in a bedroom, blew the whole corner of the house away; another shell from the same battery came through the wall, burst in the study of the Consulate, and literally everything, desks, papers, chairs, boxes, and general office furniture, was smashed and torn to pieces. The residences of the American, Austrian, French, and German consuls shared the same fate during the cannonading, which was kept up on three following days, the fury increasing from day to day.

It could not be expected that the Turks would remain quiet under such great provocation; consequently the splendid facilities for answering the Russian fire possessed by the Ottomans were called into action, and the duel between the Turkish guns and the formidable batteries of Slobosid and Giurgevo was maintained incessantly; and whilst the Russians cut Rustchuk in pieces, the Turkish guns did the same to Giurgevo. The Russians directed their fire on the prominent buildings in Rustchuk; the Turks did the same to Giurgevo. It is to be deplored that even the hospital was not spared by the Russians, though it must have been plainly visible, with its two red crescents on a white ground. The sick were brought out and laid upon mattresses on the ground. Some of the Turkish women exhibited marvellous carelessness, as if positively tired of their uneventful lives; while others, as well as men of all races congregated in Rustchuk, ran like rabbits into any hole which seemed to offer shelter. The sights and scenes were sickening and ghastly

in the extreme. The wounded lay unattended to, and the dead remained where they fell. Such was the strength of Rustchuk as a fortress, that the inhabitants had grown over-confident in its well nigh unassailable condition, and the terrible report of exploding shells in their midst excited the wildest confusion and terror.

In fairness it should be remarked that, notwithstanding the accuracy of fire to which modern arms have attained, it is difficult to prevent shells from striking any particular building during the bombardment of a town, where—the town itself being the object aimed at—rapidity of fire is of more importance than delicacy of sighting. Moreover, with respect to the firing on consular flags and the injury to the hospital, the Russians assert that the Turkish batteries were placed exactly in a line with them, so that the Russian shells passing only a foot over the parapets must strike or go close to the consuls' houses, and that the Turks had the curious trick of placing red crescents just behind each battery, teaching the Russians at least where to find masked batteries.

Had it not been for strategic considerations, it would have seemed that the firing on the two towns was quite unnecessary—a waste of powder and shot on both sides as far as the eventual result of the contest was concerned. As we have already seen, however, the bombardment and apparently needless destruction of life and property in Rustchuk was only part of a general bombardment opened upon the Turks at about the same time, from the positions along the bank of the Danube occupied by the Russians; and it doubtless had the strategic purpose of misleading the Turks as to the probable point at which the important operation of crossing the Danube would be effected. If, by drawing attention away from the intended point of passage, the Russians were enabled to cross with the minimum of resistance, it may be said that, after all, the diversion caused by the bombardment of Rustchuk was the means of effecting the crossing into Bulgaria with the greatest economy of human life for both sides. Such would seem to have been the case, judging from the fact that neither in 1828 nor in 1854 was the crossing effected without the Russians losing from 12,000 to 14,000 men, while in 1877 the loss was only about one-twentieth of that number.

At the time of crossing the Danube the dis-

position of the Turkish forces at the point chosen was as follows:—On the 26th of June there were concentrated in and around Sistova, under the command of Major-general (Liva) Achmed Hamdj Pasha, seven battalions of infantry, one and a half field batteries, and about eighty irregular cavalry. Of these one battalion was in the town itself, one between it and Warder, while five battalions lay encamped southwards behind the town. A battalion of Moustaphiz (territorial militia) lay encamped below Sistova, and on the alarm being raised this body of troops hurried away up to the landing point, and took up a position on the ridge of the somewhat steep heights skirting the river, whence they opened fire on the Russians. These Moustaphiz soldiery fought with exceeding bravery, and only thought of retreat when in danger of being taken in both flanks and cut off. Whether Achmed Hamdj Pasha, with a portion of his forces, participated in the fight did not clearly appear; but it was known that his brigade, along with the two battalions who had borne the brunt of opposition, finally struck away in the direction of Biela, which they reached at nightfall without being incommoded by the Russians. On the news of the successful enterprise reaching Rustchuk, thirteen battalions from the garrison of that place were immediately despatched in the direction of Biela; and by mid-day of the 28th six Turkish battalions and one battery stood ready at Tertenik, with sixteen battalions and three batteries at Biela. Cavalry scouts, too, swarmed all over the country as far as the Danube.

On the other side the Russian dispositions for the advance were rapidly taken. Four brigades of cavalry were speedily sent forward, one brigade of Kuban Cossacks toward Nikopol, the three others towards Tirnova. The dispositions for the advance in the first instance were taken as follows:—The Grand-duke Nicholas, in command of the centre, was to follow and support the advanced guard, and push forward toward the Balkans with half of the 4th and the whole of the 8th Corps, and endeavour to cross by Tirnova and the Slivno Pass. The 11th, 12th, and 13th Corps were formed into another army, under the direct command of the Czarewitch, to act on the Russian left, and especially against Rustchuk, which place was to have been besieged and taken as soon as possible. The 9th Corps, under the command of Baron Krudener, forming the Russian right wing, was

to proceed by the right bank of the Danube and capture Nikopol. Including General Zimmermann's troops in the Dobrudscha, the Russian forces were thus divided into four armies.

It was, however, noticeable that the Russians displayed thus early an extraordinary contempt for the Turks, and a surprising slackness seemed to pervade the army in regard to the every day duties of modern warfare. Anybody could pass without challenge or interference in the vicinity of the camp. Troops of any energy would certainly have found it no difficult task to have surprised them at that time. The Russian officers seemed to be adventurous beyond reason, and heedless of consequences, which they expected to escape—if they thought about it at all—by desperate courage and good fortune. It will be seen as we proceed that these observations are fully sustained by the conduct of the early part of the campaign.

After the crossing of the Danube, nothing important occurred except some advanced-guard skirmishes until 5th July, when the Russians had advanced as far as Biela; and it was occupied on the afternoon of that day by a regiment of dragoons under General Arnoldi. Biela is a little straggling Turko-Bulgarian town on the river Jantra, about twenty miles south of the Danube, on the main road from Rustchuk to Tirnova, and nearly equidistant from Sistova to Rustchuk. No attempt was made by the Turkish forces to resist this occupation, even the bridge over the Jantra being left intact.

On the 7th July, however, an event of much greater importance occurred. The Grand-duke Nicholas, at the head of the 8th and 9th Corps, had been pressing onwards in the direction of Tirnova, which was destined to become of considerable notoriety in the course of the campaign. This town was the ancient capital of the Bulgarian Czars, and a place of great strategical importance. Many old historical memories are associated with Tirnova, for here more than a thousand years ago was the cradle of the second Slavo-Bulgarian dynasty—the Schischmanides. They succeeded the Finno-Bulgarian rulers after the Byzantine Emperor, John Zimisces, had subjected Bulgaria and compelled the last descendant of the Czar Boris to lay aside the purple. In the year 1186 Tirnova was the capital of the Bulgarian Princes of the House of Ases; and in 1213 the Byzantine Emperor Henry came to the town to fetch his

bride, the beautiful daughter of the Czar Boris. Hungary is also associated with the name of Tirnova, from the march of Ægidius with the Magyar armies in 1270. After many vicissitudes and days of great prosperity, the Moslem invasion came, which put an end to the Empire of the Bulgarians, and almost ruined the magnificent city of the Czars. On July 17, 1393, Eselebi, son of the great Bajazet, took "Carevec," on which the castle was built, after a three months' siege. The handsome buildings in Tirnova were destroyed by the victorious Osmanlis, and the Boyards and patricians murdered in the church. Soon after the first minaret was raised here. Four hundred years passed over the old Bulgarian metropolis under Turkish rule, but in 1810 it surrendered to the Russians. Its occupation by the troops of Prince Vjazemki, however, lasted only a few months; and in 1877, for the first time since their departure, sixty-seven years before, the soldiers of the "White Czar" again marched into Tirnova, and occupied the ancient fortress. The town stands on a basaltic hill, 1000 feet high, and its position is a very favourable one for a strong defence. It is built on the precipitous banks of the Jantra, which winds through it in a most tortuous fashion. The houses are crowded together, and in many cases are built against the side of the hills, so that the door from the street leads into the second story. The whole is surmounted by a citadel—the castle of the Bulgarian kings of yore—and all around are higher hills on which strong redoubts and earthworks could have been constructed. The importance of the town chiefly consists in the fact that it gives access to the best passes of the Balkans leading to Adrianople, and that it is also the junction of roads leading eastward to Osman Bazar, and westward to Selvi.

Tirnova was occupied by a Turkish force of 3000 Nizams, a body of Redifs, and a battery of artillery. On the 6th July the Russian cavalry, under General Gourko, had advanced to within a few miles of the place, and were directed on the following day to reconnoitre towards Tirnova, and ascertain the position and strength of the Turkish forces. The force consisted of a detachment of the Guards about 100 strong, two squadrons of dragoons, and two sotnias of Don Cossacks, with a battery of six horse artillery guns; and it was intended to feel the strength of the

position, but not to attack unless there was no choice. On drawing near to Tirnova, a message was received from the inhabitants, giving the strength of the Turks, and praying the Russians to advance, as "otherwise they feared their lives would be taken;" and it was determined at all hazards to attack. Orders were given to the rest of the dragoons to advance, followed by the artillery, the newly-arrived Cossacks turning the place from the south. In this order the troops marched north of the main road, where the telegraph had already been cut, and came within view of the Turkish position behind Tirnova. The Russians could not see either town or river, which were hidden by the shoulder of the hill. But they could discern a battery of four guns, which shortly opened fire with good aim, the guns being protected by a breastwork. The foreground of the picture consisted of vineyards and wood. There was a drop behind, but the Russians could not tell what was in the hollow. On the other side of the drop a bold spur of the hills showed its profile, smooth, with close-cropped grass, and at its head descending sharply to the valley, which, winding round, joined the depression which was hidden by the trees in the foreground. Behind the spur were others somewhat like it, coming alternately from right and left, smooth, but with here and there a precipice. Just over the highest of them rose the distant blue tops of the higher Balkans. At the foot of the spur stood Turkish battalions, on the top was the battery, and on the near slope was a square redoubt, filled with infantry. Therefore there were first a river, with generally precipitous banks; then a steep smooth hill, with a battery at the top, a redoubt half way down, and battalions drawn up round the foot of the slope. This position had to be carried by the seven and a half squadrons of cavalry, which were all the force available, with eight guns.

The dragoons dismounted under cover of the trees, and skirmished against the Turks. The artillery trotted to its place, also under cover of the trees. The dragoons drove the enemy down the slope towards the river, and came in sight of the town. When the artillery advanced, and the guns opened on the Turkish battery and the masses of men at the foot of the spur, the Turkish guns had their attention taken from the dragoons and transferred to the Russian battery. The dragoons followed the retreating enemy down the slope,

where the river banks were not perpendicular, and forded the stream breast high, that they might come quickly to close quarters with the bayonet. The Turks, however, did not wait for the attack, but fled before the enemy in disorder. Round the point of the spur they ran, flinging away their cartridge boxes and their arms, leaving huge heaps of ammunition boxes. Everything that could be was thrown away, and the place was literally strewn with the *débris* of their flight. Once, indeed, they formed line to the left as they passed across the field; but a shell or two falling among them put them to flight again. They held the redoubt for a time, but two shells falling into it dispersed the garrison suddenly. The valley which winds round the spur had hills again on the other side of it, and there it was expected the Turks would make a stand; but a few Cossacks sent round by the right, and appearing on the hills, caused them to flee or hide in the woods. Thus, infantry with guns were literally frightened away by a few horsemen; and perhaps never before was a town defended by 3000 infantry surprised and captured without a blow by a handful of cavalry. Military history records many instances of cavalry being brought to a halt, and rendered actually unable to proceed on their way by reason of a body of infantry being posted in towns lying in their path. The reverse of the case is very rare, and if a position were properly intrenched and defended it would be next to impossible.

In the present instance it was subsequently explained by the Turkish commandant, Said Pasha, that, deeming the number of troops which he commanded unequal to the emergency, he had telegraphed to Shumla for reinforcements; these had come, but too late to be of avail. The troops from Shumla had reached Osman Bazar under the command of Safvet Pasha, and had halted there. But as there existed no telegraph between Tirnova and Osman Bazar, and Said Pasha's telegram to the general of the reserve had to pass through Adrianople, Constantinople, and Shumla before it was received, Safvet Pasha could not reach Tirnova in time; the governor of Tirnova believed that a strong reserve was in the rear, and therefore ordered the retreat of his forces. The Cossacks followed the rear-guard; but this attack cost them about thirty men, and they discontinued the pursuit a few miles from Tirnova. On the way the retreating forces met Safvet

Pasha and his troops; had he arrived in time it is possible that Tirnova would have been defended. It was now deemed too late, and that nothing remained but to establish the Turkish force on the most advantageous position within reach of Osman Bazar. In reality, however, the Russians did not occupy Tirnova in force until the 12th July, when the Grand-duke arrived with the greater part of the 8th Corps.

The march from Sistova had hitherto been rather like a military promenade or a triumphal procession, than the forced march which it really was. Everywhere the people came out to meet the Russians, offering bread and salt and the most friendly greetings; while the women and girls offered fruit, and loaded them with flowers. At the entrance of many of the villages arches were erected, covered with leaves and flowers. Processions, headed by priests, came out singing to meet them, with pictures from the churches, standards, and banners. There were deafening cheers, and the most extravagant joy. At the entrance of the village of Zavada, which is near the gorge that leads to Tirnova, a rude arch was constructed of branches of trees. The whole population of the village gathered at the roadside near it. The soldiers, without orders from their officers, uncovered as they passed under, to the great delight of the people; while a huge bar of iron, beaten by a mallet, gave forth the first sound resembling a bell heard here for 400 years. Just inside this gorge or hollow were two very ancient monasteries, built one on each side of a steep mountain side. The priests from these monasteries came down to meet the troops with banners and pictures, and a large Bible, which as many of the soldiers as could kissed as they passed; the people of these monasteries hoisting old bells, which had lain hidden in the basements for centuries.

When the Grand-duke arrived at Tirnova he was met at the usual entrance to the town by priests in robes, chanting prayers in the old Slavonic tongue, and immense crowds of people. With deafening cheers he was conducted to the church, where he assisted at a short service, then passed through the streets, where several arches had been erected with the inscription upon them of "Welcome," followed by a crowd of girls singing. The women and girls at the windows literally covered him with flowers. Nearly the whole Turkish population fled from Tirnova, carrying

off their goods and chattels. The houses of those who fled were more or less damaged by the Bulgarian population. Windows and doors were smashed, as at Sistova. The most needy part of the population helped themselves to what the Turks left behind. These acts were committed during the day or two of anarchy which preceded Russian rule, and followed the departure of the Turks. They were not, however, committed in the houses of Turks who remained at home. Fifty Turkish families who remained were quite undisturbed and unmolested.

On the same day that the Grand-duke entered Tirnova, General Gourko, in command of an advanced guard composed of all arms of the service, left Tirnova and set out towards the Balkans. The fortunes of this detachment will be narrated in the following chapters.

We must here briefly retrace our steps for the purpose of chronicling the taking of the town and fortress of Nikopol—one of the most important points on the Danube. We have already stated that at one time the Grand-duke feared he should have no alternative but to force the river there; but to have done so would have entailed enormous loss of life, in consequence of the strength of the Turkish position and of the large garrison assembled. After the successful crossing at Sistova, it was, however, determined to capture the town from the land side, and a portion of the 9th Army Corps was detached for the purpose.

Nikopol lies opposite the Roumanian town of Turna Magurelli, and near the mouth of the Aluta river, which was the boundary between the Roumanian forces and the great body of the Russians. The town was founded by Trajan, and it is a celebrated place in Ottoman history. Here Bajazet I. defeated Sigismund, King of Hungary, in 1396, and broke the power of the Christians so completely, that not even the Sultan's own defeat by Tamerlane six years later had the power to stay the conquering progress of the Ottomans.

The town stands on and above a short break near the centre of a continuous precipice of which the Turkish bank consists for nearly eight miles. There are a lower and an upper town, and the fortress stands high on a detached conical elevation. The Turkish armament consisted of about sixty cannon, whose range extended to Turna Magurelli. It was at this time under the com-

mand of two Turkish generals, Hassan Pasha and Ahmed Pasha, and was garrisoned by about 7000 men.

After the crossing of the Danube by the Russian army at Sistova, Hassan Pasha saw the importance of strengthening the place from the land side, which, like the surroundings of Sistova, falls in successive folds and knolls away towards the centre of Bulgaria. Accordingly a half-moon of intrenchments, supported by rifle pits, was constructed on the southern slopes of the hills, and these were occupied by a considerable force of men and guns. The Russian troops who attacked the position formed part of the 9th Corps, and were under the command of General Krudener. They accomplished the passage of the Danube within a few days after the completion of the pontoon bridge at Sistova, and at once striking westwards, marched towards Nikopol. The 5th Division, under the command of General Schilder-Schuldner, took the southern road by Djakova, for the purpose of investing Nikopol on the western and south-western side; while the 31st Division, commanded by General Veliaminoff, proceeding by the road parallel with the Danube, invested the eastern and south-eastern section—the artillery supporting the corps d'armée numbering 108 guns. At Belina, General Veliaminoff encountered a small force of Turks intrenched, and engaged them with success and little loss, continuing his advance towards the slopes and the cove which extend for a mile or two on the east side of Nikopol. General Schilder-Schuldner met with no opposition of a serious nature as he marched by Slatina to complete the investment from his side, his left wing crossing the Osma river and resting on the Danube nearly opposite the Aluta. On Sunday, the 15th of July, the investment of the Turkish stronghold was completed—the Russian troops occupying positions which would describe a semi-circle, Nikopol being in the centre of the base line formed by the Danube.

On the 14th and 15th of July the town was severely bombarded by the Roumanian batteries at Islacz (on the opposite side of the Danube), under the command of General Manu, and the Russian field artillery posted south and west of the fortress. At half-past two in the afternoon of the 15th, General Krudener having personally ridden round his lines, and observed

that all the dispositions had been made according to his plan of operations, gave the order to advance.

The Russian troops were in high spirits, and, with kindling enthusiasm, cheered and sang as they were led to the first assault. Over the rough and broken ground they marched, pouring a continuous fire upon the Turkish advanced positions. By five o'clock they had driven in the advance, and thus victoriously accomplished the first movement, and more effectually closed upon the enemy. But the most difficult part of their task had yet to be faced—the assault and storming of the intrenchments and rifle pits which extended from the left bank of the Osma river to the long slope two miles or more east of Nikopol. Under cover of a well-directed artillery fire, the Russian infantry advanced with intrepidity to the assault, but were met with a murderous fire from the guns in the intrenchments and the riflemen in the pits. Time after time the Russian troops were checked, their ranks weakened and thinned by the well-directed aim of the Turks, who maintained in a signal manner their reputation for bravery behind defences. Still Veliaminoff and Schilder-Schuldner poured in reinforcements, determined to take the intrenchments at any cost. By about nine o'clock at night they reached the intrenchments, and then, no longer trusting to their guns, they employed the bayonet. The Turks made a desperate resistance, and fought with great gallantry, but the conflict was maintained only for a very short time. The bastioned intrenchment on the left bank of the Osma was the first to yield, the defenders making a precipitate flight across the river to the batteries on the crest of the hill—an example which was followed in succession by the troops in the remainder of the half-moon of intrenchments.

Shortly afterwards a fire burst out among the military storehouses in Nikopol, bordering on the Danube, and kept burning all night. The batteries were all silent, and attention was directed solely to the grandeur of the scene. The flames illuminated the hill-side, the batteries in Nikopol, and the waters of the Danube. The solemn silence was broken only by the crackling of falling timbers. The Turks, seeing the inutility of resistance, had determined to let nothing fall into the hands of their enemies.

On the morning of the 16th the Russians

attacked with great energy, and for three hours there was fighting on the glacis. Finally they succeeded in entering the fortress, and the Turks surrendered. The prisoners were Achmed Pasha and Hassan Pasha, and 6000 men of the garrison. The booty was forty field guns planted in the batteries along the ridge, twelve of large calibre, the guns in the large fortress, and two monitors, which were, however, disabled. There were also found large quantities of ammunition and rifles, including stacks of old percussion guns, and the equipments of artillery horses, besides the cannon and the two monitors.

The number of Russians killed and wounded amounted to nearly 2000, and that of the Turks to 1500. The capture of the town was undoubtedly one of the best strokes of the war on the part of the Russians; but as in so many subsequent cases, it was conducted upon too fine a margin. For a time success hung in the balance, and it was only finally secured by engaging the last soldier

present; thus so weakening the small force that, although it made 6000 prisoners, it was not fit for further action for several days, during which Osman Pasha—who had advanced from Widdin, and had strong reinforcements within one day's march of Nikopol when it fell—occupied Plevna. What the occupation of this town by the Turks ultimately cost the Russians we shall see in subsequent chapters.

The military result of the capture of Nikopol was that the Russians were able to construct a bridge of a more permanent character than that at Sistova, and thus establish a secure position upon the Danube. The possession of the town also placed the section of the Danube between the Aluta and the Vede in their hands; it was, moreover, of the highest importance as protecting their right wing from any attack of the Turks in Western Bulgaria; and, in addition, it afforded great facilities for the transport of supplies from the frontier of Roumania.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Balkans as the Second Line of Turkish Defence—Geologic Formation and General Characteristics—Count von Moltke's description from a Strategical point of view—The Passes of the Balkans—Routes available for an Invading Army—Difficulties presented by the Passes, and position of the Russian Army—Prince Tserteleff deputed to obtain information—The Shipka, Triavna, and Elena Passes occupied by the Turks—Investigations concerning the Hainkoi Pass—Plan of Operations suggested to the Grand-duke Nicholas, and adopted with modifications—Generals Gourko and Derojinsky appointed to the command of the Advance—March of the Pioneers under General Rauch—A road made across the Hainkoi Pass—Advance of General Gourko, and description of his Force—Nature of the Country at the northern end of the Pass—Bivouac in the Mountains—Difficulties of the Pass, and loss of two Mountain Guns—A Halt and a Discovery—The Mouth of the Pass reconnoitred by Prince Tserteleff—The March resumed—Difficulties of the southern end of the Pass—The Passage accomplished—Entrance into the Tunja Valley—A Turkish Camp—Surprise and Flight of the Nizams—Reflections on the Russian Advance across the Balkans—General Gourko at Hainkoi—Turkish Forces in the Tunja Valley—Feeling of the Bulgarian Inhabitants—Reconnoitring Expeditions—Defeat of Captain Martinoff at Eski Saghra—Defeat of the Turks at Slivno—Alarm in the Russian Camp at Hainkoi—Unsuccessful advance by the Turks—The Russians start for Kazanlik—Turkish preparations to receive them—Retreat of the Turks to Kazanlik—Russian Bivouac at Maglis, and triple advance on Kazanlik—Sharp Skirmish at Oufandirkioi—Occupation of Kazanlik and Shipka by the Russians—Description of both Towns—Activity of the Turkish Government—Delay of General Gourko at Shipka—The Operations on the North of the Balkans—General Derojinsky at Gabrova—Description of the Town—Selvi occupied by General Antonof—Failure of the Russians at the Neck of Berdek—Arrival of Prince Mirski at Gabrova—The Garrison of the Shipka Pass—Attack on the Pass determined on by Prince Mirski—Advance of the Russians in three columns—General Plan of Attack—Description of the roads over the Mountains—Russian success at the Berdek Pass—Prince Mirski's attack on the Shipka Pass—Hard Fighting—Varying success, and retreat of the Main Column—Failure of the attack of the Right Column, and retreat on Coban Cupris—The attack of the Left under Captain Klientoff—Desperate fighting and gallantry of Russian Officers—Capture of Mount Berdek—The "Eagles of the Balkans"—Russian losses—Retreat of the Russians to Gabrova—Occupation of Shipka by Cossacks—Skirmish with Bashi-bazouks—Retreat of the Turks to the Shipka Pass—Isolation of the Turks—Terms of Capitulation offered to Mehemet Pasha by General Gourko and refused—Attack on the Pass by the Russian Tirailleurs—Failure of the attack, and retreat of the Russians on Shipka and Kazanlik—Overtures by Mehemet Pasha for a capitulation—Escape of the Turks, and arrival of General Skobeleff from Gabrova—The Turkish intrenchments reconnoitred—Condition of the Turkish Camp—Junction of General Gourko with Prince Mirski—Failure of General Gourko to capture the Turkish Garrison—Reflections on the Capture of the Pass—Horrible Treatment of the Russian Dead and Wounded by the Turks—Testimony of Colonel Brackenbury—Letter of French and English Correspondents to Russian Head-quarters—Desultory firing in the Mountains—The Shipka Pass intrenched by the Russians—General Gourko decorated with the White Cross of St. George—Terror of the Bulgarian Inhabitants of Eski Saghra, Yeni Saghra, and Philippopolis—Expeditions sent to cut the Adrianople Railway—Alarm at Constantinople—The Plans of Abdul Kerim Pasha—Warning by Prince Hassan—The Turkish Government compelled to admit the fact of the Passage of the Balkans—Prompt measures taken to increase the Turkish Forces—Appeal for Volunteers—Removal of Abdul Kerim and Dismissal of Redif Pasha—The Defences of Adrianople and Constantinople strengthened—Mehemet Ali Pasha appointed to command the Army North of the Balkans, and Raouf Pasha that of the South—Recall of Suleiman Pasha from Montenegro—Reinforcements of Irregulars—The Turks favoured by their Railway Communications—Arrival of Suleiman Pasha at Adrianople—Strength of the Army—Positions of the Turkish Army South of the Balkans previous to the crossing by the Russians—How affected by the Russian Advance—Mutual uncertainty as to the Strength and Positions of the Opposing Armies—Bivouac of General Gourko's Troops, and general Preparations—The Russian advance on Yeni Saghra in three columns, under Generals Boreisha, Stolletof, and Gourko—The March from Hain Boghaz, Eski Saghra, and Kazanlik—Description of Yeni Saghra—Surprise of Raouf Pasha—Burning of the Bulgarian quarters by the Turks—The Attack on Yeni Saghra, and Capture of the Town—Burning of the Turkish quarters by the Bulgarians—Pursuit of the Turks and Capture of Artillery—Turkish and Russian Losses—Destruction of Station-houses and Turkish Munitions of War—General Gourko decides to advance against Raouf Pasha—Weariness of the Russian Troops—March upon Dalboka—The Action commenced by the Turkish Artillery—General description of the Fight—Bravery of both Turks and Russians—Varying Successes—A Daring Cavalry Charge—Final Victory of the Russians—Review of the Fortunes of the Three Columns—The Advance of Suleiman Pasha—The Spirit of his Troops—The Turkish Attack on the Village of Karabunar—Total Defeat of the Bulgarian Legion—Retreat of the Russians on Eski Saghra—Heavy Russian Losses, and Preparations for the Retreat of the Russians through the Lower Balkans—Final Retreat of General Gourko—Burning of Eski Saghra by the Turks, and Destruction of the Bulgarian Legion—Incidents of the Russian Retreat—Difficulties and Sufferings—Care of the Bulgarian Fugitives—Arrival at Hain Boghaz—Official Account of General Gourko's Advance and Retreat—The Turkish Official Account—Reflections by Colonel Brackenbury, the *Times*' Correspondent with the Russian Army—Opinion of Mr. Archibald Forbes—The Passage of the Balkans scarcely second in importance to any Military Event of the Century—The Success not Utilized—Defects of Russian Strategy, and Deficiency of Numbers—Necessity for Vigilant and Brilliant Generalship—How the Russians might have reached Adrianople—Tribute to General Gourko's Daring and Generalship.

THE passage of the Danube having been successfully accomplished, the next natural obstacle which had to be surmounted by the Russian armies was the Balkan Mountains, which formed the second and most important line of Turkish defence. Indeed, Count von Moltke, writing

after the war of 1828-29, said that in all future wars the Porte ought to limit itself to the concentration of its forces, and the true defence of Turkey should commence at the foot of the Balkans. It will be seen, however, that the defence did not begin even at the Balkans, which were crossed by the Russians virtually without opposition.

This great natural bulwark, as shown on the map, separates Bulgaria, strictly so called, from the province of Roumelia, which is partly inhabited by Turks and partly by Bulgarians—the former dwelling chiefly around Adrianople and eastward towards the Sea of Marmora and the Bosphorus. Rising up steeply to a height of from 3000 feet to 5000 feet on the western shore of the Black Sea, to the south of Varna, the Balkans run westward, broadly speaking, parallel to the Danube, until they terminate, to the southwest of Sophia, in their highest point, the Orbelos, which is about 9000 feet above the level of the sea. The whole mountain mass is formed by a main ridge, parallel to which run two chains of lower heights—one on the north and the other on the south of the backbone of the system. Geologically speaking, all the Balkans are of chalk or limestone formation; the chalk, however, being broken through in many places by masses of rock of volcanic origin. The mountains are thickly wooded—for the most part with forests of beeches and oaks, though in places there is an extensive growth of fir trees. The general slope is steeper on the south than on the north; but towards the north numerous “spurs” and minor ridges run out, the sides of which are, as a rule, extremely precipitous. Along the western portion of the range the summits are covered with snow till about the middle of June. The eastern portion is lower, never rising beyond 4000 feet or 5000 feet; and to the traveller approaching the range from the Bulgarian side it appears to be far less lofty than it really is, from the fact of his having to scale a range of hills lying close along the foot of the mountains.

According to Count von Moltke, who has described the country from a purely strategical point of view, the Bulgarian plains at the foot of that part of the range which lay before the Russians are covered for such an immense distance with underwood of oak, as to render it impossible for troops to march straight across the country.

The hills rising from these plains also constitute no inconsiderable difficulty. “They are of limestone rock,” says Count von Moltke; “their tops are perfectly flat, and from these the sides fall in perpendicular walls of rock, varying from ten to 200 feet in height, often forming the most singular defiles. Towards the valleys the face of the rock slopes more and more as it descends. The hill tops, therefore, are accessible only at a very few points; they are mostly wooded, not with the magnificent trees of the Balkans, but with almost impenetrable brushwood.” The idea, however, of the Balkans presenting an insurmountable barrier against an invader, Count Moltke made light of. He thought it was not warranted by the height or formation of the mountains. It was partly a traditional notion, he says, and in so far as it had any foundation, it was based upon “a number of small difficulties which are accumulated in five or six marches, and which have to be encountered by all the troops in succession.” The roads, too, are few and bad; they are, in fact, mere bridle paths, and the defence of the Balkans, therefore, might be carried on, “not so much by erecting forts on the principal defiles, as by bodies of troops which would occupy them, and with the assistance of barricades, abattis, &c., oppose a very formidable resistance to any force attempting to cross the mountains.” The same great strategist also considered the passes which allowed the passage of troops, and—excluding the road from Widdin through Servia, which enters Turkey by way of Nissa and Sophia—he describes six routes leading southward from the Danube, above the Dobrudscha, and crossing the Balkans from Bulgaria into Roumelia, converging upon Adrianople, which may be summarized as follows:—

1. From Rahova or Nikopol, on the Danube, by Lovatz, thence over the Balkans to Philippopolis, and by Hirmenli to Adrianople.

2. From Sistova or from Rustchuk—the roads from these two places joining at Biela or Senovzy—and thence by Tirnova, Gabrova, and the Shipka Pass over the Balkans, and down to Kazanlik and Eski Saghra, and to Hirmenli.

3. From Rustchuk to Osman Bazar and to Kazan, whence there are roads over the mountains to Karnabat and Jamboli, at which last-named place is a railroad to Hirmenli, and by Buyuk Derbend there is direct communication with Adrianople.

4. From Rustchuk to Rasgrad, where the Turtukai and Silistria roads join, and thence to Shumla, and Tschulikevak, and Indschikoi, from whence there is a road to Kazan. There is also a direct road from Silistria to Shumla.

5. From Silistria to Pravadi and Aidos.

6. All the Dobrudscha roads unite, and passing by Karamurad and Hadji Oglu Bazarjik, pass to Kolydscha. At Kolydscha, one branch turns to Pravadi, and the other to Varna and Podbashi, and eventually to Aidos.

Route No. 1 was the longest, but an army moving some way further still to the westward could cross the mountains at the lowest point west of the Jantra.

Route No. 2, by Tirnova and the Shipka Pass, was blocked by Tirnova, which, being surrounded by the Jantra river, offered a strong position. Von Moltke, however, considered this the best pass to force, and Mr. Archibald Forbes says it affords incomparably the easiest crossing of the Balkans of any between the sea and Orchanie. From the Wallachian base over the Shipka the road to Adrianople is shorter and better than from the Dobrudscha to the beautiful city laved by the waters of the Maritza.

Route No. 3, by Osman Bazar, Kazan, and Slivno, was very difficult, the track near the latter place crossing a number of deep wooded dells, with numberless streams running down to the Kamtchik river.

Routes Nos. 4 and 5, by Silistria, Shumla, and Aidos, offered no difficulties as far as Tschulikevak. Thence the road winds through ravines, and along the sides of precipices to the summit, whence it descends by a steep defile.

Route No. 6, Kolydscha and Pravadi, presented some difficulties. Nevertheless, this passage was quite possible, as General Diebitch crossed it in 1829. It is true he was virtually unopposed, and had only a small force.

The defence of a lengthened mountain chain through which there are several passes is—like the defence of a long line of river on which there are several points of passage—recognized to be a difficult undertaking; but should the mass of the defensive force be kept concentrated at some convenient and central point, with corps of observation only pushed forward into the mountains, it ought, if capable of manœuvring in the field, to be able to fall with the greatest

success upon the heads of columns debouching from the defiles; and therefore—especially as long as Shumla and Varna, or even only one of these fortresses, remained in the hands of the Turks—the passage of the Balkans could easily be made a very critical enterprise for the Russians to undertake.

One great difficulty, however, had already been removed by the event described in the previous chapter, viz., the occupation of Tirnova by the Russian army. The route we have described as No. 2 had thus become available for the invaders; and when the Grand-duke arrived at Tirnova a Russian force had already set out for the Balkans, under conditions which we shall now proceed to describe.

The duty of obtaining information as to the roads over the Balkans, the movements of the Turks, and their numbers and dispositions, had been confided to Prince Tserteleff, a diplomatist, who had been one of General Ignatieff's secretaries at Constantinople, and who was attached to the Russian embassy at Paris at the time of the declaration of war, but who was now serving as a volunteer in the second regiment of Kuban Cossacks. The Prince had directed the advance-guard in the streets of Tirnova, where he had rendered signal service. As he knew Bulgaria well, he soon discovered that, although there were three Passes over the Balkans within easy marching distance of Tirnova, the road which has been described as route No. 2, or the Shipka Pass, and two others nearly parallel with it, viz., the Triavna Pass, which connects the village of Triavna with Magilish, and the Elena Pass, which connects Elena in the north with the lower Tunja valley—all three had been occupied by the Turks, and fortified by them in such a way as to render the forcing of a passage in either case a very difficult matter. Count von Moltke, however, refers to a Pass between those of Triavna and Elena, known as the Hainkoi Pass, but speaks of it as a path not practicable for an army. This Pass, named after a little village situated in the midst of the mountains, was not entirely unknown to the Turks, who speak of it under the name of Hain-Boghaz ("Traitor's Pass"); but this route had a very bad reputation, and they considered it so impracticable that they did not include it in their plans of defence. Pursuing his investigations, the Prince heard of a Bulgarian peasant who had recently been through the Pass;

and finding this man, he learned that he had made the passage with one of the ox-carts of the country. From this circumstance it appeared probable that it would be practicable for artillery. With these *data* as a basis, the commander of the advance-guard submitted to the Grand-duke Nicholas the following plan of operations:—

1st. In order to cross the Balkans, to follow the road leading from Tirnova by Prissovo, Pliakovo, Voinesti, Raikovels, and Parovtsi to Hainkoi, into the Tunja valley.

2nd. To conduct by this route all the advance-guard with the exception only of the 30th Don Cossack Regiment, with two cannon, of which two sotnias with these two guns should be sent to Gabrova in order to watch the Gabrova-Shipka-Kazanlik Pass, and four sotnias should be left at Tirnova.

3rd. To leave all the waggons at Tirnova under the protection of a mixed detachment formed from all the troops of the advance-guard, and to carry with them all their baggage on beasts of burden. The supplies to consist of biscuit for five days, and forage for three. To provide for the sustenance of the men and horses as much as possible from the resources of the country—so as to use both the provisions and the forage only at the last moment.

4th. Order of march:—(a) Advance-guard; horse-pioneers—to set out two days before the main body. (b) Principal forces:—The 4th brigade of Chasseurs with the mountain artillery, two brigades of the Bulgarian Legion, two sotnias of “Plastounes,” the half squadron of the Guard Cossacks, the Oural sotnia, and the dragoon and Don Cossack brigades. (c) Rear-guard:—One brigade of the Bulgarian Legion and the regiment of Kieff Hussars. The rear-guard to remain at Tirnova until the arrival of the 8th Army Corps.

5th. After the occupation of the entrance of the Pass debouching at Hainkoi in the Tunja valley, General Gourko would repair to Kazanlik in order to attack the Shipka Pass from the rear, while the sotnias of Cossacks left at Gabrova should make a false attack from the front. According to the calculation, the simultaneous attack (or double attack) on Shipka from front and rear would take place on July 17. As will be seen later on, this last calculation was not entirely realized, General Gourko having had to fight all the way during his march in the Tunja valley.

The Grand-duke Nicholas gave his entire approbation to this scheme. Only, instead of a simple demonstration on the north front of the Shipka Pass, he preferred a real attack to sustain that on the south; and for this purpose he forwarded to Gabrova all the 30th Regiment of Don Cossacks except one sotnia, the 36th Orel Infantry Regiment, and a battery. Major-general Derojinsky was intrusted with the command of this detachment.

On the 10th July the pioneers, under the orders of General Rauch, commenced their march. Following the order agreed upon, viz., that the main body of the advance-guard was not to follow until forty-eight hours afterwards, General Gourko made use of this delay by sending Colonel Tchernozoubof to find out whether the Turkish forces, which were said to be concentrated at Osman-Bazar, were advancing towards Elena and Bebrova. This officer ascertained that there were no Turks in the neighbourhood of the two latter towns.

Meanwhile General Rauch, Colonel Roniquères, Prince Tserteleff, and the pioneers, were marking out a road across the Pass. The first part of this road, from Tirnova to Parovtsi, is easy enough; there are only two very steep ascents, and even up these the 9-pounders could be taken with strong teams of oxen; but on setting out from Parovtsi the road ascends towards the principal range by a very steep slope, and the difficulties commence. For three days this handful of men worked with indefatigable perseverance and zeal to make a road for the artillery. The officers set the example to their soldiers. General Rauch threw off his uniform, armed himself with a hatchet, and remained at the head of the workers during the whole of the time. At several places enormous blocks of rock were encountered, which necessitated the use of the pickaxe—General Rauch being unwilling to use dynamite, as the explosions would possibly have given warning to the enemy. By the time the end of the Pass was reached the soldiers were worn out with fatigue, and a halt was made to await the rest of the column.

The road having been thus prepared, early in the morning of the 12th of July a Russian force, under the command of General Gourko, set out from Tirnova, consisting of the following troops:—

Cavalry—Half squadron selected men and non-

commissioned officers from the Imperial Guard. 2. Dragoons of Kazan and Astrachan. 3. Don Cossack Brigade, under Colonel Tcherno-zoubof—regiments Nos. 21 and 26. 4. Cossacks of the Oural, organized as mounted sappers or pioneers, two sotnias. 5. Brigade of Duke Nicholas of Leuchtenburg, hussars of Kieff, No. 30 Don Cossacks.

Artillery—1. Batteries of Don Cossacks Nos. 10 and 15. 2. Regular horse artillery, No. 16, Colonel Orens. 3. Two mountain batteries, except two guns sunk in crossing the Danube—fourteen guns. These guns were drawn by one horse, with splinter bar of shafts (supported by straps coming over the haunches) attached to the trail. They could be carried on the horse's back, if necessary, as was all the ammunition.

Infantry—1. Brigade of Tirailleurs—battalions 12, 14, 15, 16. 2. Two brigades of Bulgarian volunteers, each of two legions. 3. Two sotnias of Plastoune, or Kuban Cossacks.

This force, roundly stated, consisted in infantry of about 5000 Bulgarians and 2000 tirailleurs (sharpshooters); of cavalry, about 1000 dragoons, 500 hussars, 2500 Cossacks, 200 Kuban Cossacks or Plastoune, and the half squadron of the Imperial Guard—in all about 11,000 men, with eighteen field and fourteen mountain guns. The 200 Cossacks under General Rauch, who had prepared the road, were ordered to keep to the front and act as outposts for the main column.

The country at the northern end of the Pass was found by General Gourko's army to be very rich and beautiful; and on the first day nearly the whole route lay through fields of barley and maize nearly ripe, and of meadows bright with flowers. Towards the close of this day's march the Russians succeeded in reaching the entrance of the Pass. Here commenced the hills, and the column marched slowly, Cossacks on either side climbing the slopes and moving over rocks with their horses as fast as the infantry moved on the road, which was fairly good at the commencement. Further on, however, the way became more difficult, and the road ran beside a rocky stream, which it sometimes crossed, and now and then was so broken that the bed of the stream was chosen in preference; and a flock of sheep and goats—which had been taken with the column for food—gave considerable trouble, and caused some delay by their efforts to break away.

The march was continued until darkness set in, and then a halt was made for the night. There were a few huts in the neighbourhood, and the General occupied one about as large as an Irish cabin. Princes and officers sheltered themselves as best they could, and the rest bivouacked in the open, although there is a great change between the heat of day and the cold of night in these regions. There was a heavy sacrifice of sheep; division was roughly made, and the men were seen bearing on their shoulders great masses of flesh, shining all the ruddier for the light of the roaring fires which crackled and blazed on both sides of the road up the slopes of the hills. Horses drank in the stream before being picketed. There was hay enough and barley in abundance for forage; but as the column was marching as lightly as possible, no tents had been brought, and the men suffered somewhat from the dew and the cold.

The following morning, the 13th of July, the march was resumed before daybreak, the half squadron of Guards leading the way towards the 200 Cossacks with General Rauch, who were some distance in front. The road was now a mere mountain path leading partly across or along streams, partly round hill sides, sometimes hanging many feet above the stream, and sloping dangerously towards it. At one place two of the mountain guns rolled down from the path to the bottom of the valley, but without injuring horse or man. The guns which passed first cut up the road a great deal, and for the last battery the day's work was terrible; nearly all the drivers pressing their horses and laying on their whips—the gunners assisting by pushing or pulling. Never did horses work harder, yet the guns hung behind; but it is doubtful whether artillery was ever taken along such roads before even at such a pace. In many places the steep and narrow path had but just room for a gun, the edge hanging over the gulf; and the passage was only made possible by laying down a few bushes with earth over them, into which the wheels sank as the guns tottered over the abyss. Sometimes the horses refused to pull further, and it became necessary to put as many as ten instead of six to a gun; while in some places the path was so narrow that the wheels had not six inches to spare, and both staff and cavalry passed in single file. At mid-day there was a halt for rest, and the march was resumed late in the afternoon

Hitherto there had been occasional open spots, with corn, pasture, and meadows; but for the remainder of the journey there was nothing but a narrow mountain gorge. By six o'clock the highest part of the ascent was reached. At this point the soldiers found a wooden column with the names of the officers and non-commissioned officers of the advanced Cossack squadron inscribed upon it.

During the day Prince Tserteleff, who was with the advanced guard of 200 Cossacks, had gone in the dress of a peasant, accompanied by a Bulgarian, nearly to the mouth of the Pass, and found that the Turks were posted at the exit, but that no intrenchments had been formed. Acting on this information, General Gourko pushed on his advance. The path now began to descend, and the march was continued until midnight, when the column halted and bivouacked. No fires could be made on account of the proximity of the Turks; but a few hours' rest were taken, the men having again to lie down in the wet grass without shelter.

The march was resumed at six in the morning of the 14th of July, and the road was found to be even more difficult than the portion already traversed; but General Rauch had paid less attention to the road here than hitherto, partly because of the necessity of pushing rapidly forward and seizing the outlet of the defile, partly, as before stated, because it would have required powder and blasting to repair the road in the places most needing it, and this would have given the Turks the alarm. Within a mile of the exit the valley closed in and presented a deep gorge, with the stream rushing and foaming over the rocks below, while the path seemed only to cling to the mountain side, and was broken away in places. Some of the mountain guns were got over, but the heavier artillery had to wait some hours until the path could be widened and repaired.

The 200 Cossacks still kept the advance, and at ten o'clock, pushing cautiously forward round the defile, which suddenly opened out to the width of half a mile, all fatigues were forgotten. Before the eyes of the soldiers stretched the famous valley of the Tunja, or "Valley of Roses," one of the most beautiful and fertile in the world. There was the road to Constantinople, and the hearts of those who had just reached it beat high. In his report General Gourko, with natural pride, bore

this testimony to his troops: "Only the Russian soldier could in three days cross so difficult a pass, and also transport mountain artillery. Justice obliges me also to say that the Bulgarian soldiers have not remained behind the other troops in the struggle against the difficulties of the march."

Being aware of the presence at the entrance of the pass of two companies of Anatolian Nizams, General Rauch was not surprised to find a Turkish camp pitched in the valley. The Russians had kept their secret so well, that they found these Nizams lying down in their tents or occupied in preparing soup. Four Bashi-bazouks posted on a little height were the only look-outs of the camp. At the sight of the Cossacks they fled at a gallop towards Kazanlik, without otherwise warning the Turkish troops of the arrival of the enemy. The advent of the Russians was therefore totally unexpected; but on the further approach of the Cossacks the Nizams, becoming aware of their presence, opened fire upon them, and the horsemen were compelled to wait the advance of the infantry. The tirailleurs speedily came up, together with two mountain guns, which at once opened fire; and the Turks were seized with panic and retired, leaving behind them all the stores of the camp, cooking vessels, water cans, meat, and ammunition. Sufficient provisions were found there, in the shape of corn, bread, biscuits, &c., to feed the Russians for three whole days. The Cossacks were sent in pursuit of the retreating Nizams, and the passage of the Balkans by the Russians was accomplished.

This advance may fairly be ranked with the most daring exploits of modern warfare, and is remarkable both for the difficulties it encountered and the dangers to which it was exposed. The difficulties were overcome by the resolute endurance of the Russian soldiers, and the danger was found to be unexpectedly slight, owing to the neglect of the Turkish generals. Had the Turks occupied the Pass in any force, or had they defended it with fortifications, the passage would have been impossible. Even on the 14th, although the crest of the Pass had been reached by the Russians, it would have been possible either to have checked their advance, or to have prevented the column from debouching into the valley of the Tunja. For the last five or six miles the way was flanked on both sides by a labyrinth of low, sharp, rocky, steep hills and ridges, through which the road

wound in the most tortuous manner—sometimes down deep in the hollows of the gorge, and at others skirting along the rocks two or three hundred feet from the bottom. A small force of infantry posted along these sharp, rugged heights could have kept at bay almost any number of troops; for the reason that but a small number could advance at a time, and it would have been for the most part impossible to scale these heights to turn the position if they had been occupied by a resolute enemy. At the end of the road there was a plain, or very low hill, beyond which were other hills about 100 feet high—a perfect position for artillery to destroy a column issuing from the Pass. But no advantage was taken of either of these means of defence, and the line of the Balkans was thus turned with scarcely any loss to the Russians.

On the same day that the Russian troops entered the valley of the Tunja and took possession of Hainkoi, the Turks received some reinforcements; and, advancing from Tivarditza in the evening, took the offensive. The Russian advance-guard, posted at Kunari, and composed of the 14th battalion of chasseurs and two sotnias of Plastounes, with two mountain guns, moved forward to encounter the enemy. Before reaching the village of Kozesmedi they deployed and opened a musketry fire, which was kept up until the arrival of some reinforcements sent from Hainkoi by General Gourko (15th battalion of chasseurs and two mountain guns), when the Turks beat a retreat and were pursued by the chasseurs as far as Tivarditza. The fall of night stopped further pursuit, and the Russians returned to Kunari.

Two Turkish camps were taken between Esekchi and Tivarditza, in which arms, cartridges, equipments, and clothing were found, as well as some surgical instruments and appliances. The Turkish force, consisting of four battalions (two of Anatolian Nizams and two of Egyptian troops), retired upon Slivno.

At Hainkoi General Gourko was at an almost equal distance from Slivno, Yeni Saghra, Eski Saghra, and Kazanlik. As Slivno was in regular communication with the head-quarters at Shumla, the Turks could concentrate large forces there as they liked. At Kazanlik and at Shipka—when General Gourko advanced by the Hainkoi Pass—the Turks numbered from 5000 to 6000 men; but in the rest of the Tunja valley their forces were insignificant. They were, however, quickly increased, as the

railway from Jamboli to Adrianople passed within 25 miles of Hainkoi. The Tunja valley is very thickly populated, and to a great extent by Bulgarians, who had been much exasperated by the massacres of the preceding year, and who were thus disposed to render all possible assistance to the little body of the advance-guard which had ventured so far from the base of operations. Had the inhabitants been favourable to the Turks, the Russians must inevitably have met with a very different reception.

The southern entrance of the Pass, as we have already shown, was secured by the Russian advance-guard and the infantry on the morning of the 14th; but during the whole day the artillery was struggling in the Pass, and by night only the two Cossack batteries had arrived, the hussars and one regiment of dragoons remaining to escort the batteries of field guns, which did not arrive until the day after. The 15th of July was mainly devoted to rest, both men and horses being very much fatigued by the exertions of the three previous days. Small reconnoitring parties, however, were despatched in various directions.

At nine o'clock in the morning Captain Martinof set out with two sotnias of Don Cossacks, and in two hours arrived in sight of Yeni Saghra. The Bulgarians who were working in the fields came to meet him. In answer to inquiries as to whether there were any Turkish forces in the town, they said that there were 2000 infantry, but no cavalry or artillery. At this moment, however, unobserved by the Russians, a cavalry train arrived at the station with thirty-five carriages full of troops. Thinking that he only had to deal with infantry, Captain Martinof sent one-half sotnia to the right and another to the left, for the purpose of breaking up the rails and thereby destroying the communication; he himself remained with the other sotnia in reserve. The half sotnia on the right reached the highway, where it drove back the advance-posts of the Turks, cut the telegraph wires, and then retired. The troops on the left were, however, obliged to retreat before superior forces. Captain Martinof then threw himself on the right side of the town with his two sotnias, in order to make a fresh attempt to destroy the railway. At the same time two squadrons of Circassians menaced his left flank. Captain Martinof having caused his troop to change front, sent forward half of his cavalry

in skirmishing order against the Circassians. This movement was met by the Turks unmasking a battery of six cannon, supported by a strong line of sharpshooters and two battalions in column. The Cossacks received the first discharge at a distance of about 200 yards, but it only killed three of their horses. Captain Martinof then quickly assembled his men, and beat a retreat at a gentle trot, the Bulgarians running after them, begging them not to abandon them to the reprisals of the Turks. For over five miles the Russians were hotly pursued by the enemy in skirmishing order, and running at racing speed, with the artillery following at a trot. The pursuit only ceased at the village of Karilkeui.

Another reconnoitring party sent towards Slivno, met on the other side of Orezare a body of Circassians, supported by artillery and infantry. The Russians, however, having been reinforced by the Kazan dragoon regiment, the Turks fled and were pursued till night-fall.

Towards the afternoon of the 15th the Russian camp was disturbed by an alarm from the Bulgarian outposts on the left. Three battalions of Nizams were seen advancing with four squadrons of cavalry, and the outposts were naturally uneasy. To meet and drive them back, there were sent the 9th (or Astrachan) dragoons, four squadrons of Cossacks, and a battery of horse artillery, the whole under the command of Colonel Korivo, of the Astrachan regiment. The Turks retreated, and the dragoons and Cossacks pursued them till long after dark, killing and wounding several of their number. The Cossack colonel was also wounded. It was past midnight when the little force returned to bivouac; but a captured standard was carried to the tent of General Gourko.

The day following, the 16th of July, the troops were called together, and the column set out for Kazanlik. Two brigades of the Bulgarian Legion, two batteries of mountain artillery, and a part of the 26th regiment of Don Cossacks, remained at Hainkoi, under the orders of General Stolletof. This detachment was to guard the defile, in order to cover the retreat in case of misfortune. If, however, the Shipka Pass were taken, the position was to be abandoned and the main body joined at Kazanlik. The inhabitants of this town had been informed of the arrival of the Russians on the 14th; on that day the chief Turks and Christians had assembled together, the first announcing to the

Bulgarians their determination to defend themselves to the last, and asking them to remain neutral. Just at this moment a zaptieh entered the room with an agitated face, and cried out to the Turks, "The Kaimakan (or military governor of the town) commands you to come quickly to the Konak; the Muscovites (as the Turks call the Russians) have just crossed the Balkans at Hainkoi." The Kaimakan stirred up the Turkish population to march with the Nizams, and he succeeded, with the help of Sadoula Bey, in forming a small force, the nucleus of which consisted of five battalions of Anatolians, with which he proceeded on the road to Oouflani.

The road taken by General Gourko to Kazanlik led through a low flat valley, shut in by the Balkans on one side, and some lower but picturesque hills on the left. Through the valley runs the river Tunja. The first part of the way led through a badly-cultivated and rather marshy tract; but soon the ground on the Balkan side of the river rose slightly, and was covered with maize and tobacco. For the first two hours nothing was heard of the Turks; but at ten o'clock the position taken up by the force from Kazanlik was reached, and from near the front of the column came a few dropping shots which, being fired without aim, flew over the heads of the first troops, and raised little clouds of dust on the parched soil around the staff, which accompanied the most advanced infantry. General Gourko pressed forward at once, giving orders for the artillery to come up on the left of the road and support the chain of skirmishers formed instantly by the foremost tirailleurs.

The Turkish force which had been sent from Kazanlik, as already stated, commanded by Kouloussi Pasha, had taken up a position in some vineyards and orchards at Oouflani in front of the Russian advance. No time was lost by the tirailleurs, who, although each burdened with a weight of seventy pounds, threw themselves at once into their work. The Turks for a time held their ground, and poured in a hail of bullets; but being badly aimed, they missed for the most part the line of skirmishers, and flew far over their heads. The Russian artillery, however, soon came up, and two batteries opened a fire of shrapnel, before which the Turks retired, firing as they went, and pursued by the tirailleurs. These men had been chosen for their accuracy of aim, and although every step

of ground was contested with bravery, the Turks could not match the well-directed fire of the Russian riflemen, whose balls struck on the head or chest, leaving few slightly wounded men, whilst, on the other hand, the Turks fired so carelessly that they did not even put their rifles to their shoulders. The Russian artillery fire in addition proved very effective, a large proportion of the Turkish dead being found shattered by pieces of shell. The Russians finally charged with the bayonet, driving the Turks before them, and a running fight was continued for five or six miles, when the Turks retired behind their fortifications near Kazanlik. Many prisoners were taken, including the Kaimakan of Kazanlik, according to whom the Turks had five Anatolian battalions engaged, commanded by Kouloussi Pasha in person. Their losses were considerable—about 400 Turkish bodies having been found upon the field of battle, without counting the wounded. The Russians only lost sixty men *hors de combat*, of whom two were officers seriously wounded.

The Russians bivouacked at Magilish on the night of the 16th, and on the next morning advanced upon Kazanlik in three columns; those of the right and centre, composed of the chasseurs and the Bulgarian Legion, marching, the one by the mountains, and the other along the road at the foot of the heights; while the left column, consisting of the brigade of dragoons, the Kieff hussars, and the 16th battery of horse artillery, followed the Tunja valley. Before leaving their bivouac the Cossack outposts announced the presence of the Turks among the gardens and upon the main-road to Kazanlik, as well as in the village of Ouflandirkioi; and when the cavalry started at five o'clock (an hour after the infantry), a cannonade had already commenced in the direction of the mountains. The left column then advanced in the following order:—the half squadron of the Guard and three squadrons of hussars formed the first line; the Kazan dragoons and the battery were placed in *échelon* on the left rear, and the Astrachan dragoons, in column, acted as general reserve; the sotnias of Cossacks were deployed and marched in advance, forming a front which extended from the Tunja to the mountains. The cavalry advanced in this order to envelop the enemy's right flank. Soon the vedettes signalled the presence of several hundred Bashi-bazouks in the gardens and villages upon the banks of the

Tunja, on the Russian left flank; and a squadron of hussars, afterwards followed by two squadrons of dragoons, were sent to drive them out. In addition a section of the battery, with a squadron of Kazan dragoons as support, was ordered to advance through the wood to the right towards the flank of the position occupied by the Turkish artillery, in order to support the infantry. The rest of the cavalry advanced upon Karganli at a trot. After a series of engagements and *mêlées* with the Bashi-bazouks, on foot and on horseback, who were established among the thickets and vineyards, the squadrons sent to the left drove them back to the other side of the Tunja. The section of artillery, and the squadron sent to the right to support the infantry, aided by the Cossacks, defeated the supports of the Turkish artillery, and the Turks fell back with their guns in the direction of Kazanlik. The Kieff hussars and the troops of the Guard turned the village of Karganli, and deployed upon the Kazanlik road; but were unable to charge the retreating Turks, because part rushed into the thickets and vineyards which bordered the road and opened fire, whilst the rest ascended the mountains. Four guns were then brought up, which shelled the groups of Turks on the hill-sides; and the rest of the cavalry, leaving one squadron to cover the battery, pressed on towards Kazanlik. On approaching the town the hussars were received by the fire of two cannon which had been placed in position on the east, and by musketry from the infantry on the slopes of the mountains. Two squadrons of the Kazan dragoons and the horse-artillery were then sent forward as reinforcements; and about mid-day, while the Russian artillery fired in two directions upon the Turkish guns and infantry, the Kazan dragoons, the Cossacks, and a squadron of hussars, dismounted and approached the eastern extremity of the town. The rest of the cavalry pursued their march with the intention of turning Kazanlik by the south, but were arrested by a marsh. Soon after the Turkish artillery ceased firing, and was abandoned; and the Russian dragoons drove their opponents back in confusion into the town, where nearly 400 Turks were made prisoners, and from which, on the east and south, the inhabitants came out with white flags. The hussars, who entered Kazanlik by the south-west, and immediately sent detachments to cut the telegraph line to Karlova and to Shipka, had to engage in a combat

with the Turks posted in the houses, who were, however, speedily dislodged by the fire of some dismounted troopers. The patrols sent out towards Kalofer and Shipka met with no Turks in either direction, those who were flying from Karganli and Kazanlik having taken to the mountains.

The town of Kazanlik was thus captured by the cavalry, and the object of the day's operations attained; but seeing the panic of the Turks, it was resolved to complete the success of the day by at once occupying Shipka—a village situated at a height of about 2000 feet. In spite of the extreme fatigue of the cavalry, who had been marching rapidly across fields, through mud, and among vineyards since five o'clock in the morning, it was sent forward after an hour's rest.

The Turkish detachment at Shipka took refuge in the mountains. Early in the morning it had sent a column of infantry with the intention of occupying the mountains on the north-east of Kazanlik, and threatening from thence the right flank of the Russians; but the Russian skirmishers occupied these heights so rapidly that they anticipated this Shipka column—which thus had to retire disappointed. At three o'clock in the afternoon the Astrachan regiment occupied the outskirts of the village of Shipka, captured a convoy of biscuits, and closed the mouth of the Shipka Pass against the Turks. It also captured a Turkish camp, with all its contents—consisting of large supplies of artillery ammunition, cartridges, and provisions, as well as a field-telegraph. The infantry did not arrive until the evening.

As both Kazanlik and Shipka played a somewhat important part in these and the subsequent operations, a slight description of them may be interesting. The town of Kazanlik has, according to Kanitz, a population of some 21,000 souls. It owes its prosperity to its central position, two roads leading from it into the valley of the Maritza; the Shipka Pass being, moreover, the only route across the Balkans practicable for carriages for a considerable distance on either side of Kazanlik. The town is the centre of the trade in essence or attar of roses, no fewer than forty-two of the 123 localities at which it is made being in its district. Estimating the total amount of the essence made annually on the southern slopes of the Balkans at 3500 lbs., it is calculated by Kanitz that the valley of Kazanlik alone produces 1800 lbs.; and when it is remembered that 3200 lbs. of roses are

required for the manufacture of a single pound of the essence, some idea can be formed of the extent to which rose trees are grown in this fertile valley. The village of Shipka lies a two hours' journey to the north of Kazanlik; Haskioi being midway between the two, situated in the midst of fields of roses and groves of walnut trees. From Shipka the road begins to ascend the pass; the highest point of which is about 4300 feet above the level of the sea. From a hill lying adjacent to the road, a little to the north of the summit, an extensive view over Bulgaria is obtained. Beyond Gabrova two roads are plainly seen, which run, the one to Selvi and thence to Lovatz and Plevna, the other to Drenova and Tirnova, forming the most direct line of communication with Rustchuk and Bucharest on the one hand, and with Osman-Bazar, Eski-Juma, and Shumla on the other.

Returning to our narrative of this remarkable advance, it may be observed that hitherto the plans of the Russian commander had been successfully carried out; but it will be now seen that the Turks were awaking to the dangers of the position. Reinforcements were rapidly despatched, and measures were promptly taken to check the Russians in their onward movement.

It had been designed that General Gourko should reach Kazanlik on the 16th, and on the 17th be free to assail in the rear the Turks holding the Shipka Pass, while Prince Mirski with the 9th Division attacked them from the front. The success of this movement was necessary in order to establish a better line of communication than that afforded by the difficulties of the Hainkoi Pass. But, as we have already seen, General Gourko did not reach the village of Shipka until late on the 17th; and his men, from almost incessant fighting, were too exhausted to be immediately led against the enemy. Here, therefore, we will leave the General for the present.

Turning to the operations on the north of the Balkans, we find that on the 15th of July General Derojinsky's column occupied Gabrova. This small town, with a population of 10,000, situated in a narrow valley with the mountain on one side and the river Jantra on the other, is most picturesque in appearance, with narrow streets and raised roofs covered with large flag-stones in place of slates. Two bridges are thrown across the river; one is of Bulgarian con-

struction, the other bears on a large slab of marble some verses of the Koran and the monogram of Abdul-Medjid, in whose reign the bridge was built, in 1855. The population of Gabrova was entirely Bulgarian; before the Russian occupation only five or six Turks could be found among its 10,000 inhabitants, and these were public functionaries of the Government at Constantinople. The soil of the surrounding mountains being of the most stony description, and offering no inducement for tillage, the inhabitants of Gabrova are thrown on the local industry, of which the principal branches are cutlery, the fabric for those yellow slippers with pointed ends so general throughout the East, and the laces of black wool with which the white garments of the Bulgarians are braided. The majority are rich, and the column found amongst them all the facilities for revictualling that could be desired.

Having learnt that General Antonof, who had been sent to Selvi in order to unite the troops which had arrived at Tirnova with General Krudener's left wing, had been fighting for four and twenty hours with a sotnia of the 30th Don Cossacks and a platoon of the Vladikavkaz regiment, against 1500 Circassians or Bashi-bazouks, General Derojinsky sent him a sotnia as reinforcements, by whose assistance Antonof put the Turks to flight, and remained in absolute possession of this important position, which covers the right flank of Tirnova. Another sotnia, sent into the mountains on the 15th, pushed on as far as the neck of Terdek, of which it took possession; and driving before it a company of Turkish infantry, descended into the valley. At this moment it was attacked by a Turkish battalion, and compelled to retreat from the Pass; but it established itself at the foot, and sent for reinforcements. Two companies of the 36th Orel infantry regiment were sent to their aid on the morning of the 16th, under the command of Major Boïno-Rodzévitch, and arrived at seven in the evening; but as the men were very fatigued, the attack was postponed to three o'clock on the following morning. When the reinforcement arrived, the Turks had already strongly intrenched themselves in the Berdek Pass.

On the 16th, Prince Mirski with the Orloffsky regiment and three battalions of the 9th Division, of the 8th Corps, after numerous obstacles had been overcome, arrived at Gabrova, the Pass of which had already been secured. But still the most

difficult of all the passes—the Shipka—was in front of him, and between him and General Gourko. Not only was the Shipka Pass occupied in force by the Turks, but the surrounding mountains, commanding several small Passes known to the peasantry, were observed by the Turkish outposts. The whole strength of the Turks in these regions was 14,000 men, with six Krupp rifled steel guns and three brass mountain guns. It was known to Prince Mirski that the pass of Shipka had been fortified, for it was reported that the Turkish troops who had been sent from Sophia, Adrianople, and Constantinople, had been working upon the mountains for a month previous; but the strength of the forts it was, of course, impossible to judge. A party of Cossacks, however, under a lieutenant, pushed forward near enough to draw the enemy's fire, and succeeded in obtaining a fair idea of the position occupied by the defenders. But, notwithstanding the strength of the position, and the fact that no news had been received as to the movements of General Gourko at Shipka on the south, Prince Mirski, who was accompanied by the young Grand-duke Nicholas, determined that the passage should be attempted. All the paths by which the position could be reached had been strongly intrenched by means of trunks of trees and trenches, and guardhouses were established at the most important points.

The Russian detachment was divided into three columns; and it was ordered that the right column (four companies of the 36th Orel infantry regiment, with four cannon), under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Khomenko, should march through the village of Zeleno-Drevo to Imetlia, leaving one company and the artillery at Zeleno-Drevo, to fire at the Turkish camp in the Shipka Pass: that the column of the centre (four companies of the 36th infantry) should march to the Pass without artillery by a bad mountain road, in order to effect a diversion in the front (the generals, Prince Mirski and Derojinsky and the young Grand-duke Nicholas, marched with this column); and that the left column (two companies of the 36th regiment), under the command of Captain Khentof, should ascend a path by a wood to the east of the centre, and debouch near the summit of the Pass. Each column was conducted by a guide. At seven o'clock on the morning of the 17th a company of tirailleurs from the 36th infantry, two cannon, and two sotnias of the 30th Cossacks were sent to

Major Boïno-Rodzévitch's column on the extreme left; and Colonel Orlov, of the 30th Cossacks, was intrusted with the command of the detachment. Two companies of the 36th infantry were left in charge of the baggage.

The Turkish forces in the Shipka mountains numbered at least three to one of the Russians, and had the enormous advantage of an almost impregnable position. The temerity of the Russians is only to be explained by the fact, that General Mirski, instead of attacking separately and having all the Turkish troops to deal with, believed that he was only sustaining the attack which General Gourko was to make from the south, and which, for reasons already described, could not take place at the time arranged.

The three columns intended for the attack on the Shipka Pass set out at seven o'clock in the morning of the 17th. Prince Mirski and the young Grand-duke Nicholas, with the entire column, crossed the Jantra a short distance from Gabrova—the road leading along the banks of the river in a natural valley, shut in on the left by a succession of high conical hills and precipitous banks, well covered with wood; while on the right of the boundary was a ridge of mountain, broken by glens and dells, with an occasional plateau covered with standing corn. At several points the river was crossed and re-crossed by high-peaked ancient Roman arches. The ammunition waggons forded the stream, while the soldiers used the bridges. Although the enterprise was so hazardous, the men were in enthusiastic spirits; and as they stepped out over the rough uneven road, their favourite choruses were re-echoed by rock and wood. About an hour's march brought the column to a remarkable position known as Coban Cupris. As this spot became rather important to the Russian troops at a later stage, it may be interesting to describe it somewhat minutely. A quarter of a mile nearer Gabrova than the point referred to, the river Panokarka, a tributary of the Jantra, takes a bend to the south-west, and cuts right into the base of one of the high wooded conical hills already referred to, then sweeps round the foot of a range of cliffs which runs almost due east and west. These cliffs are of grey granite, and form a natural barrier of remarkable strength against the advance of any army from Gabrova, always supposing them to be defended by troops possessed of fire-arms. On

the right hand side of the road—that is, on the west and south-west—the rocks rise to a considerable height, though not so high as on the opposite side of the river, while the line of cliffs is also more broken. On the south side, about half way down the range of cliffs, there is a curious cleft; and it is at this point that the Jantra is crossed by a bridge, the cleft being utilized as the continuation of the roadway, which is on either side dominated by walls of granite. Had the Turks chosen to defend this granite gateway to the Shipka Pass, a whole army might have laboured in vain to assault the bridge. No opposition being manifest, the troops advanced steadily along the road, which in the course of a few moments assumed the characteristics of the first part of the route.

At ten o'clock a report was received from Major Boïno-Rodzévitch, announcing the capture of a Turkish redoubt in the Berdek Pass, and asking for reinforcements; whereupon one of the two companies left to guard the baggage was sent to this officer. Meantime Prince Mirski and the young Grand-duke persevered with their main division to a point named Cervan Brak, where the road leaves the course of the Jantra, and turning to the left, ascends the mountain by a zig-zag path. The road or track presently became simply a mass of boulders and jutting rocks of old red sandstone, capped by the granite, and so steep as to be at an angle of forty-five degrees. On the right the ground fell away into a precipice over 100 feet in depth. Still there was no appearance of the enemy, and the men pushed onwards, till away in the front they descried the first of the Turkish batteries crowning the head of a conical mountain; while rather more forward a second battery on the right, also on the crest of a hill, and dominating the whole road, was unmasked. Prince Mirski at once extended his skirmishers in front, who with great intrepidity marched forward among the broken ground and boulders, taking advantage of the cover as they advanced. Speedily the guns in the Turkish batteries opened fire, and they were supported by Turkish sharpshooters, who occupied admirable positions behind rock escarpments and breastworks, formed in the most scientific manner of trees and bushes, with covered ways leading round the mountain sides to the rear, and communicating with the batteries. With a bravery and indifference to danger beyond all praise, the men of the

36th Regiment still marched onward round one hill and skirting another—fired upon by the Turkish riflemen in front and on the left, located amid woods on the slopes of a deep defile, which separated them and the Russian columns. Comparatively little damage was done by the Turkish batteries; but the sharpshooters of the Turkish army, themselves so securely sheltered, and looking down upon their assailants, had nothing to do but pick them off as soon as they left cover to advance. The odds against the Russians were tremendous; still they advanced, gaining yard by yard, and driving in the skirmishers of the enemy. A stand was made by the Turks in some force at a point named Kovashi-Kalderma. Here the roadway turned eastwards, through what might be called a gully. This gully is at right angles to the lower road, up which the Russians were climbing and creeping; and as it is hemmed in by walls of rock, it formed not only perfect cover for the Turks, but a natural breastwork strengthened by bushes and cut trees; while the Turkish right was effectually protected by a precipitous glen 400 feet deep, with the left equally safe from assault, by a defile 500 feet sheer down. On some broken ground nearly opposite this gully, but of course lower down, the Russian troops dug a series of rifle pits; and sheltered in a measure by these extemporized earth-works, they opened a heavy fire on the Turkish position, which lasted nearly an hour. Then, with a hoarse cheer, bayonets were fixed, rifles were gripped hard; and despite a well-sustained volley from the Turks, they advanced to the charge, and speedily and gallantly cleared the gully. Encouraged by their success so far, the Russians continued to advance amid a galling fire for another hour, and in the course of one hour more they had taken the breastwork of the first redoubt on the conical hill.

About three o'clock in the afternoon the noise of a cannonade was heard in the rear of the enemy's force; it was thought that the troops engaged were those of General Gourko, but in reality they were the Turks who were firing on the Russian left column. Reinforcements came pouring down the mountain defiles to the assistance of the Turks, and there was a probability of the main Russian division being surrounded. Men were falling fast, and the Turkish position appeared impregnable; for no sooner was one breast-work captured than they retreated to another, which

dominated the last. Then, too, the redoubts were not only splendidly placed; but supposing one taken, the Turks had only to retire to the next, carrying with them their guns, and they commanded their last position. In these circumstances, and with a mere handful of men at his command, Prince Mirski determined to retire for the day until reinforcements came up. Under cover of skirmishers Mirski gradually retreated down the defile at six o'clock, retiring in admirable order to the bridge at Coban Cupris, where a stand was made, and where the troops bivouacked during the night; the Turks refraining from pursuit.

As we have already stated, the right column, under Colonel Khomenko, left the main body at Cervan Brak, taking the course of the Roserica stream. This pathway is known only to the shepherds, and it skirts a series of remarkable wooded ridges, running east and west, now north and south—glens deep and dark on the right hand and on the left. With tremendous efforts the men scrambled up the steep track, assisting the guns by the way. At points it seemed impossible to get forward at all. The men had literally to creep up the steep, while the guns were dragged by ropes attached to trees higher up the bank. Almost incredible labour was expended on the advance, which was slow; but for most part of the way the Russians were screened from the observation of the enemy by the last ridge of the mountains and by the woods. When, however, they had attained the heights of Selensderno, the Turkish outposts on their left flank opened fire. The Russians with a supreme effort got their guns into position, and commenced to shell the camp of the Turkish soldiery on the heights near Mount St. Nicholas, while the infantry, extending along the shoulder of Selensderno, and partially screened by brushwood and trees, did serious execution on the Turkish skirmishers. A deep defile separated them from Marko Kralski Bair, a high double-coned mountain, where the Turks had begun to construct two batteries, and whose slopes were thickly dotted with Turkish sharpshooters. It was at this point that the order to retreat was received from Prince Mirski; and after firing only five rounds from the guns brought with so much labour to this important point, the right wing also retired on Coban Cupris. The guns were taken back to Gabrova, while the troops joined

the main body at the Shepherd's Bridge, and remained there in bivouac.

The left column, under Captain Khentof, made an almost independent attack. This battalion, immediately after leaving the town of Gabrova, struck to the left, along the course of the Jantra. Following this track, the troops were shut in by overhanging cliffs. Here the utmost caution had to be observed in the advance, for it would have been dangerous in the extreme to have gone forward in the face of anything like opposition from either side of the pass. Still ascending, they crossed the backbone of the ridge, from which issues the head waters of the Jantra, and descended into a valley named by the shepherds Srieck Recatteh. On the east side of this valley there is a plateau, where the Turkish troops had taken up a position; and at the right hand corner of the head of the valley, on an overhanging crag of the mountain Prabacka, there was stationed a Turkish gun which, when the Russian troops deployed into the valley, opened a well-served fire. The Turks descended from the plateau to the valley to meet their foes, who, extending in skirmishing order, supported by the remainder of the battalion, advanced with great gallantry, pouring in volley after volley upon the Turks, who were compelled to retire to the plateau, where they found cover amongst the woods, from which they rained down a heavy fire; the gun on the crag to the right still continuing to play with effect on the advancing Russians. It was the promptitude with which the advance-guard deployed in skirmishing order and opened fire, which alone permitted the troops composing this column to form themselves as they left a path along which the men could only walk in single file. When the bulk of his men had emerged a charge was ordered by the Russian commander, and under a sharp fusillade from the concealed Turks the Russians coolly marched up the slopes, delivering several well-directed volleys, while comrades fell both right and left. Out of two companies, 400 strong, only sixty came out of this affair unwounded; but they accomplished the task which had been set before them, and dislodged the Nizams from the plateau, the latter retreating in hot haste round the head of the valley and taking the road to the rear of the one gun battery. The Russian commandant, seeing the Nizams reinforced from

the main body of Turkish troops away to the south-west, and finding the plateau untenable so long as it was commanded by the gun on the high peak on the opposite side of the valley, and, moreover, finding himself so completely outnumbered, thought it prudent to give up the hard won position. Captain Khentof maintained his ground until four o'clock, having received three gun-shot wounds during the fighting.

All the officers of the column except Lieutenant Orlof were wounded. This officer, with a platoon of his company, covered the retreat of the column, by keeping the enemy—by whom he was pressed on three sides, and whom he was obliged to charge several times with the bayonet—in check. Sub-lieutenant Fialkovsky, who although wounded did not wish to leave the fight, remained at Lieutenant Orlof's side until the end, and lent him useful service.

The column of the extreme left had been more fortunate. It set out at eight o'clock in the morning of the 16th, and marched by almost impassable roads until the next day. On the 17th, at half-past three in the morning, the men who composed it had arrived by crawling, without being perceived, within 200 yards of a camp of 1500 to 2000 Turks, established on the top of Mount Berdek, when one of the Bulgarians, who was acting as guide, involuntarily pressed the trigger of his gun and fired. The sound brought all the camp to their feet, and the soldiers immediately commenced a desperate fusillade. The Russians having been discovered, there was not a minute to lose. The officers, pointing with their sabres to the Turkish camp, led the advance. The men immediately followed, and were speedily in the midst of the Turks. For half an hour a hand to hand fight ensued with terrible slaughter. At last, at sunrise, the Russians were masters of the situation, after having lost fifty-eight men. On the slopes were stretched the dead bodies of 200 Nizams, almost all killed by the bayonet. If the officers had not used their revolvers, it might have been said that the Russians had not fired a shot. The Orel infantry had fought with the bayonet, and the Cossacks with the butt ends of their muskets. Two companies and a sotnia had thus succeeded in carrying works defended by two battalions of Anatolian Nizams. The latter retired to a neighbouring height, carrying with them their wounded, but abandoning the dead. In the evening they

struck their camp, and fell back upon Mount St. Nicholas. Orel in Russian and Bulgarian means eagle; and after this feat of arms the inhabitants of Gabrova gave the name of Eagles of the Balkans to the soldiers of the Orel regiment.

Notwithstanding this success on their extreme left, the day had been a most disastrous one for the Russians. Two officers and seventy-seven men had been killed, and four officers and 128 men wounded: that is to say, the Russians had lost one man out of every ten. They had not been able to carry away all the wounded, and these gallant soldiers suffered a horrible death. These losses, the fatigue of the troops, who had all been engaged, even the reserves, and especially the retreat of Captain Khentof, which opened to the Turks a road under a wood which debouched in the rear of the whole detachment, compelled Prince Mirski to cause his four columns to retreat on the night of the 17th, and to re-occupy their positions of the 16th. He there spent the 18th in great anxiety. What had become of General Gourko, who had not appeared at the rendezvous? This question had been asked again and again, until at last, in the evening, a Bulgarian arrived at the camp, bearing a note in which the commander of the advance-guard communicated the reasons of his delay, and stated that he would attack on the morning of the 18th. As twelve hours had already elapsed since the time General Gourko had fixed for the assault, it was thought too late now to support him; and just as the attack of the Gabrova detachment had been isolated on the 17th, so was that of General Gourko on the 18th—and to a certain extent it miscarried from the same cause.

Before resuming the recital of the operations of the latter (General Gourko), it is here only fair to notice the extreme bravery of the Russian officers, the audacity with which they exposed themselves in these engagements, and the unusual proportion of officers and men found after each fight among the killed and wounded. The official reports stated that Commander Galdine and Captain Andrianof, a member of the staff, were the first to leap into the intrenchments of Berdek; also, that in the column which was engaged at this point the officers fought in person, some with the bayonets taken from the dead; and that nearly all had killed several of the enemy.

Returning now to the movements of General

Gourko, it will be remembered that he reached Kazanlik about mid-day on July 17, and he immediately sent on his cavalry to the head of the Shipka Pass. The Cossacks, on arriving at the village of Shipka, situated at the foot of the pass, found the Turks in the act of evacuating the camp which they had established there. A skirmish ensued which was marked by an incident sufficiently romantic to deserve record. Colonel Ouchakof, carried away by his ardour, and followed by some of his Cossacks, ventured so far that he found himself suddenly in the midst of a large body of Bashi-bazouks, who attacked his handful of men with fury. Wounded in four places, the colonel still fought on for some time, but his horse having been killed he fell with him. His strength failed him, and it was with difficulty he succeeded in disengaging himself from his steed. Seeing the apparent impossibility of escape, and the large number of his enemies, he thought that military honour was satisfied, and resolved to surrender. But at this very moment he saw a Cossack, who had given up his sabre, killed at once without pity. The Bashi-bazouks who pressed round him on all sides were grinning so ferociously that he had no doubt of the fate which awaited him. A sudden resolution therefore seized him. Fight he certainly could until his last breath, but his fate seemed none the less sure. The instinct of self-preservation regaining the ascendancy, he resolved to attempt to escape. "Men," said he to the three or four Cossacks who still struggled desperately at his side, "men, follow me." Collecting his strength, the colonel commenced to fly, followed by his men. There was a little wood at some distance, and fortunately they reached it in spite of the shots which were fired after them. The wood led to a gorge which they got through safely—although losing blood and being pursued by the Bashi-bazouks, whose cries they could sometimes hear. At last they crouched under a rock, where they waited for the night. Some days afterwards they rejoined a Russian detachment. In the interval a report had been sent to St. Petersburg, in which it was stated that Colonel Ouchakof had disappeared, which implied that he was either killed or a prisoner. The general belief, however, was that he was dead. His sister hastened to Bucharest, and her joy can be imagined on learning that he was living, and rapidly recovering from his wounds.

The result of the sudden arrival of the Russian cavalry at the village of Shipka, and the fight which ensued, was to compel the Turks to retreat to the intrenchments at the head of the Shipka Pass, without being able to carry away the provisions which they had accumulated at the foot of the mountain. The occupation of Kazanlik, and of the village of Shipka by the Russians, also prevented them from obtaining any further supplies from the Tunja valley, and, as we know, the Pass to the north was barred to them by the detachment from Gabrova. This co-operation of circumstances, brought about by the good arrangements of the Russian plan, rendered the defence of a collection of fortifications, which subsequent events proved were almost impregnable, impossible for more than a few days.

In view of this situation, on the morning of the 18th General Gourko sent the Turkish commander a letter offering him a capitulation. Mehemet Pasha not having replied, General Gourko decided to attack. It was, it must be admitted, a hazardous enterprise, but boldness had thus far succeeded so well with the Russian general, that he might reasonably think it would succeed again. From the village of Shipka was seen, at a height of from 3500 to 4000 feet, the Turkish encampment in the midst of a fertile plain, and nearly 500 feet higher still the parapets of the battery of Mount St. Nicholas. It will give an idea of the frightful slope by which these 4300 feet were ascended, when it is borne in mind that the road which leads to the plain is only from two to three miles in length—including the innumerable windings which it makes on the side of the mountain. It was a path suitable rather for goats than men, and was so covered with rocks that it was impossible to take artillery. The attacking column was therefore simply composed of the 13th and 15th battalions of chasseurs (light infantry), and two companies of tirailleurs.

The Russian tirailleurs advanced gallantly, and made an attempt to carry the top of the Pass and the batteries placed there; but meeting with a well-sustained fire from seven battalions of the Turks, General Gourko, despite the heroic efforts of his men to turn the Turkish position, was compelled to withdraw. Another attack was subsequently made in stronger force. Working from right and left in a thin line, the Russians climbed the steep mountain

side, and drove the Turks from point to point, till on the right they approached a small redoubt placed on a hill which flanked the Pass. When the tirailleurs came near the redoubt, pressing forward step by step, the Turks ceased firing and were seen crowding on the parapet, raising their guns, to which they had attached their white handkerchiefs, in the air. The Russians knew that the summons of General Gourko to capitulate had remained unanswered, and a moment of hesitation followed; but when a large white flag was carried to the foot of the slope and two officers were perceived in close proximity to it, no doubt could any longer be entertained that the Turks wished to cease all resistance. Major de Lignitz, military attaché of the German Embassy, who had followed General Gourko's expedition, was amongst the combatants as a spectator; and he states that he approached the last of the Turkish sharpshooters, who were slowly retiring, and found in the impression which he made on him, by his gestures and his words, a confirmation of this opinion. He was going to mount into the intrenchment with the Turk, when fortunately a staff officer of the brigade of chasseurs held him back. A chasseur was called who understood Turkish, and he was sent with the Turk for the purpose of summoning an officer. The Turkish soldier went with the chasseur, who was seen no more, to the place where the officers and the flag had remained. From thence all climbed into the intrenchment and the Turks descended from the parapet. Orders had been given to the chasseurs to remain under cover, so as to be ready for any eventuality; but as time wore on the Russians gradually emerged, and stood exposed and expectant. Suddenly there came from the fort, first two or three shots, which might have been accidental, then one or two more, and finally, at a given signal, from both ends of the fort a heavy volley, followed by a second. The white flag had apparently been used only as a snare to draw the Russians out of cover under the fire of the Turkish intrenchments. So sudden and fierce was the fire that in their two battalions the Russians lost 142 men killed and wounded in a few minutes. The survivors in their fury waited for no order to attack, nor regarded any formation. With one common impulse and with shouts of wrath they rushed on and took the fort within a quarter of an hour. But their numbers were unequal to the task of carrying the main defences,

which consisted of batteries of Krupp field pieces and mountain guns admirably disposed behind earthworks, which had been constructed with extreme care.

After the rugged zig-zag road from Shipka to the ridge, of which we have spoken, there is a good road extending the length of the summit of the mountain, which is also the top of the Pass. This summit is very narrow, and its green sides offered no shelter for an attacking force. The tirailleurs several times attempted to scale the sides, on the top of which, behind the intrenchments, shone the guns of the Turks. But without artillery the task was impossible, as they were received by an artillery fire, and also by the fire of the Turkish infantry posted in two lines. Colonel Klimantovitch, commander of the 13th battalion of chasseurs, was amongst the killed; and as the attack of the Orel regiment, which had been counted upon from the north, did not take place, the Russians fell back by direction of the commander of the 15th battalion. The retreat was effected in perfect order; the Turks fired with their artillery, but did not venture out of their intrenchments. The total losses of the detachment amounted to more than 300 men, and in their retreat the Russians had been compelled to leave some of their wounded, who had fallen in the front rank, to the mercy of the enemy.

General Gourko's troops were worn out with fatigue, and in order to afford some rest to those most in need of it, as well as to protect Kazanlik from a surprise, on the evening of the 18th he sent into that town five Bulgarian battalions, two companies of Plastounes, the Don Cossack brigade, the half squadron of the Guard, the Oural sotnia and the mountain artillery; whilst he kept near him, in the village of Shipka, in order to recommence the attack on the next day, the 4th brigade of chasseurs, a Bulgarian battalion, the regiment of the Kieff hussars, the brigade of dragoons, and the three batteries of horse artillery.

Early on the morning of the 19th a Turkish officer came to General Gourko and delivered a letter, in which the Pasha commanding the Shipka Pass declared himself ready to capitulate. The officer was, however, in the first place, called upon to explain the act of treachery believed to have been committed the evening before by the Turks. He replied that the Turkish officers were in no way responsible for it, as they had not been able

to prevent their soldiers from firing on the Russians when they saw them at so short a distance.

The terms of the capitulation and disarmament, which it was agreed should take place the same day at noon, were then drawn up; and the Turkish envoy immediately returned, promising to bring back the answer of the Pasha in two hours. Some time after his departure General Gourko resolved to employ the time necessary for the negotiations profitably, in carrying away the wounded left on the field of battle the evening before; and for this purpose he sent some members of the ambulance corps and some officers and soldiers of the Bulgarian Legion, disarmed and with white flags, and wearing armlets of the same colour. As the envoy had not returned at twelve o'clock, General Gourko began to suspect that the Turks had again deceived him, by sending him an envoy and by entering upon negotiations which were in reality simply for the purpose of gaining time to allow them to escape by the mountain paths. Accordingly, he sent a party of volunteers to see what was going on in the Turkish camp, and got ready a reserve of a battalion of chasseurs and a Bulgarian battalion, with four mountain guns, to support them in case of a fresh act of treachery. But about two o'clock in the afternoon—before even the volunteers had been able to carry out their mission—some members of the ambulance corps returned from the field, announcing that the enemy's camps were evacuated, that the head of the Pass was free from Turks, and that the advance-guard of the Russian Gabrova detachment had just arrived.

In order to explain the latter circumstance, it is necessary to return to the movements on the north side of the Shipka Pass. As seen from the Gabrova side, there were two redoubts which played an important part in the affair of the 17th of July. These commanded almost the whole of the road down to Cervan Brak, and they were further strengthened with breast-works and out-works. Still ascending the road, there was a three-gun battery on the right, dominating the other two, and that commanded by a redoubt on the left, with embrasures and platforms for guns *en barbette*. A quarter of a mile further on was another three-gun battery, overlooking the others, and in front of a "khan," which the Turks had built for winter quarters. Still further back, and higher, was another on the right. On the face of St. Nicholas' mountain

was a powerful battery, with rifle pits and breast-works and flanking covered ways; while to the left of this, on an angle of the mountain looking every way, was a V-shaped battery for guns *en barbette*. The strongest of all was in the shape of a zig-zag, and armed with five Krupp steel guns. This zig-zag not only commanded the road towards Gabrova at every point for miles, but dominated every other battery, and commanded, likewise, the winding road to Shipka. But the highest of all was a two-gun battery on the very crest of Mount St. Nicholas, 4300 feet above the sea level.

As we know, the Gabrova detachment remained quiet in its positions during the 18th. On the 19th, at four o'clock in the morning, nine companies of the Orel regiment with four guns, under the command of Major-general Skobelev, who had only arrived on the previous evening, advanced towards the Pass. This column sent Colonel Shroukof—who was created Major-general for his brilliant conduct in this expedition—in the advance-guard, with the order to occupy the height on which the column of the centre had fought on the 17th. Before arriving at this position Colonel Shroukof halted his troops, and in company with Captain Nikiforof, commander of the company, and ten sharpshooters, climbed the height to examine the Turkish position. No one was seen in the Turkish works; they ascended still higher—the Turkish intrenchments remained silent. It was decided to advance still further, the company being ordered to follow. The first line of the Turkish intrenchments was thus reached, and were found to be deserted. They continued to climb the mountain, expecting each moment to receive the fire of the Turks, but no enemy appeared.

Major-General Skobelev now arrived with two companies, and under his command the three companies continued the ascent. They thus passed, successively, several lines of intrenchments and batteries, in which they found evident traces of the recent flight of the enemy. Arms, clothes, ammunition, cartridge cases, and property of almost every description, were lying about on the ground in the greatest disorder. In the first camp were found some oxen with their throats half cut, some wounded Turks, some corpses, and three flags. One prisoner was made, who explained that there had been fourteen tabors of Turks in the Pass, and that on the morning of that day the Pasha had ordered them all to take flight. According

to the calculation of the time, the envoy must have been sent to General Gourko either at the same time that this order was given or a little later, for the evident object of gaining time.

The principal camp exhibited signs of the same disorder as the others, and similar traces of a recent and precipitate flight. Three Krupp guns were still pointed to the south, as they had been during the fight of the 18th, the sighting points of which even had not been carried away by the Turks. Altogether, eight guns, five of which were Krupp, several thousand rifles (Peabody and Martini), cartridge boxes, and knapsacks, fell into the hands of the Russians. The Turks had fled by a steep path on the west, where the least baggage would have been embarrassing. The officers, in order to escape more easily, had acted as the soldiers. In a corner were seen, piled up, their sabres, with the belts ornamented with gold and red silk, and a large number of handsome revolvers in polished leather cases. Shortly after General Skobelev arrived at the top of Mount St. Nicholas, the members of the ambulance corps sent by General Gourko to carry away the wounded also reached there, and the Russian detachments of the North and of the South thus became united.

When he had been informed of the events we have described, General Gourko ordered his troops to remain at their bivouacs at Shipka and at Kazanlik, whilst he himself proceeded to the top of the Pass with his staff and a small escort of cavalry. In order, if possible, to capture the Turks in their flight through the mountains, he ordered the dragoons, with some artillery, to occupy the southern outlets of the mountain paths which debouch at the villages of Imetli and Softiar, to the west of Kazanlik; but the movement was useless, and nearly the whole of the garrison succeeded in reaching Philippopolis.

An examination of the Turkish positions at once showed how strong they were, and surprise was at first expressed at their hasty desertion, especially as the Turks had sufficient provisions for at least two or three days. The true explanation of their precipitate flight was doubtless the knowledge of the horrible manner in which they had treated the Russian dead and wounded, to which we shall presently refer, and the fear that if they became hemmed in they would be exposed to the reprisals of the Russians.

The capture of the Shipka Pass concluded the

first part of General Gourko's operations. A detachment sent into the Triavna Pass, on the 20th, traversed it throughout without meeting a single Turk. Thus in eight days three Passes of the Balkans had been effectually secured by the Russians, and they had most successfully pierced the second line of Turkish defence within three weeks of the passage of the Danube. Modern wars furnish very few examples of the enterprise of an advance-guard so daring, so rapid, so well executed, and so fortunate. Even of the five days' biscuit carried by the Russian troops three only had been consumed; the provisions seized in the Turkish camp, and the resources of the country, had supplied the remainder.

Everything connected with the passage of the Balkans proved that the Turks were there lamentably at fault. They first allowed an enemy to cross with artillery a Pass in their own country that they apparently knew nothing about; and then when General Gourko, by his rapid march, was able to attack them at the southern end of the Shipka Pass, the strong force which was defending it almost immediately abandoned it. The Russians marched and fought in a manner that it would be scarcely possible to surpass; but the subsequent history of the Pass showed conclusively that they never could have taken it had the Turks defended it as General Radetzky's men subsequently did, and as the Turks themselves afterwards defended positions not one fourth as strong.

There remains, however, one incident in connection with the passage, which in an impartial narrative of the events it is impossible to pass over in silence. Of all the features of the Russo-Turkish war, perhaps the most painful was the terrible sufferings and cruelties inflicted upon non-combatants. Of this we shall speak more fully in the next chapter. We have here to deal with the treatment of the Russian dead and wounded in the engagements just described. As already recorded, in both attacks made by the Russian troops they were compelled to retreat, leaving some of their wounded in the hands of the Turks. As soon as it was discovered that the Turkish troops had retired from the Pass, and a junction of the Russian forces had been effected, search was made for the wounded officers and men, and then the dreadful fact was discovered that the Turks had mutilated every Russian soldier who had fallen into their hands, whether alive or dead, together

with the messenger who had been sent forward with a flag of truce in answer to a signal from the Turkish lines. Several correspondents of the English and foreign press, who had advanced with the Russians, were witnesses of what had taken place. The following is extracted from a letter of Lieutenant-colonel Brackenbury, the military correspondent of the *Times* who accompanied General Gourko, and which was published in that journal on the 7th August. The writer says:—

“Let me only tell what the staff saw as they rode up yesterday afternoon. Passing up the narrow winding road, with heaps of rough stones and boulders at every step, we came upon dead bodies of such as had fallen out of the power of the Turk. There they lay, with that expression fixed on their faces which came from their hearts at the moment when they fell. An officer told me of one case he had seen of a wounded Mussulman with smashed thigh lying on the ground. When the Russians came to give him help he writhed his body into a half sitting position, then, with gnashing teeth and grin like a savage animal, fired at and wounded an officer. In a moment Cossacks sprang forward and transfixed him with their lances, but the same savage expression of perfect rage and hatred remained on his face after death. His lips were drawn back over his teeth, his face wrinkled, his eyes, though dulled, yet wearing an expression of ferocity. But the dead killed in battle have often placid faces, for the warrior's mind has turned to softer thoughts before nature fixed the last expression. Presently we are met by men carrying downwards on a stretcher the headless body of an officer, and it begins to be told that this is not a solitary example. On the top of the pass the whole truth is told. The Turk, regularly enrolled in the army of the Sultan, and led by regular officers, has mutilated every Russian soldier that fell into his hands. On the way along the position, looking down to the right from the road, there, heaped round a telegraph post on the green sward, are the heads that had thought, and planned, and hoped, and feared but yesterday, perhaps this morning, but they looked small and shrunken, probably from loss of all blood, and the countenances tell no tale, as far as I could see in a hurried, horrified examination. A few paces further on is a circle of Russians—officers and men—gazing, fascinated, at a spectacle within. There are the bodies collected together

for examination, all headless, some cut limb from limb, some treated in a manner which is universally regarded as the deepest insult that can be paid to the body of a man alive or dead. But were these men alive or dead when they were thus treated? With regard to some there may be a doubt, but with regard to others no doubt. Here was to be seen a body with wounded finger dressed, and the rest cut off ruthlessly, perhaps in struggling with the knife. There lay what was a man, in an attitude showing plainly that he had striven to save his throat; near him was another with the Red Cross on his arm, having, perhaps, dressed the wounded finger of the first named; one in the terrible exhibition lay with bared belly, slashed across with knives, and showing that blood had run from the wounds; another had been cut limb from limb. A young and well-shaped form, with clearer skin than the rest, had been beheaded and otherwise shamefully mutilated—but there was not a single wound of any description on his body produced by regular warfare. . . . Returning towards the other, or eastern flank of the position, we pass a group of Turkish wounded—some fifty or so—whose wounds are being dressed and cared for as if that group of heads had never been seen. The men look afraid, as well they may, for they cannot believe that the Russians are less barbarous than themselves. They are most distinctly men of the regular army, well fed, well clad, driven by no pangs of hunger to commit crime, cleaner and finer men than the little *tirailleurs*."

That the above account is trustworthy will be seen from the following letter, which was forwarded to the Russian head-quarters, and subsequently published by official authority:—

"KAZANLIK, 9-21st July.

"As foreigners, authorized to follow the operations of the Russian army, as the representatives of some of the principal organs of the European press, we consider it our duty to publicly certify to the barbarous acts committed by the regular Ottoman troops in the defence of the Shipka defile. On the 5-17th and the 6-18th of July, in the deadly conflicts which preceded the evacuation of the intrenched works constructed by the Turks, certain positions were successively occupied and abandoned by the combatants of the two armies, without either side having time to carry

off the dead and wounded. On the termination of the struggle the Turks, abandoned in large numbers, were collected and attended to upon the plateau itself by the surgeons of the hostile army; but of the wounded Russians who had the misfortune to fall in a place momentarily occupied by the Turkish troops, not one remained alive. From twenty to thirty unfortunate men were decapitated, several had their feet, hands, ears, noses, and sexual parts cut off; their breasts were gashed with yataghan cuts, and their heads carried away into the Turkish camp, where the Russian troops found them after the occupation of the works. We saw with our own eyes these severed heads, these mutilated bodies, some showing by the contraction of the muscles, and the contortion of the members, the horrible tortures of a mutilation effected during life. We saw a decapitated and mutilated body still extended upon the ambulance stretcher, on which it had been placed wounded by comrades, and not far off the bodies, also decapitated, of the two ambulance men, wearing on the left arm the badge of the Red Cross. Confining ourselves strictly to what we saw, and leaving to those who witnessed the engagement itself to point out the violation of the rights of war committed by the Turks in raising two flags of parley, and then immediately firing upon the Russian troops who were resting, we submit to the judgment of the civilized world the contrast presented on the morrow of the engagement: a few hundred yards apart, on the one hand, more than fifty wounded Mussulmans attended to according to the precepts of humanity by the surgeons of the Russian army; on the other hand, the heap of several heads, a hideous trophy of the barbarities of the regular Ottoman garrison.

(Signed)

C. B. BRACKENBURY, Lieutenant-colonel,
Military Correspondent of the *Times*.

DICK DE LONLAY, Special Correspondent
of the *Moniteur Universel* and the
Monde Illustré.

II. DE LAMOTHE, Correspondent of the
Temps.

J. L. PELLICER, Correspondent of the
Illustracion Espanola y Americana.

Certified according to the original.

Tirnova, 15-27th July, 1877.

NELIDOW, Director of the Diplomatique
Chancellery."

During the 20th and 21st of July 837 Turkish prisoners, including several officers, were captured in the neighbourhood of Shipka, while many Bashi-bazouks yet hung about the almost inaccessible mountains, and fired at passing Bulgarians and soldiers. An officer of the Russian army, Colonel Roniquères, riding from Kazanlik on the 20th, was so killed. He rode out with his Cossacks, intending to go to the bivouac at Shipka, but they took a road too much to the left, and knew not that they were in the wrong direction till a volley from some bushes, succeeded by a second, brought him and a Cossack to the ground. The Cossacks charged and killed about ten of the Turks, but could not save their commander, who, with several bullets in his thigh and an artery cut, soon bled to death. Orders were speedily given to scour the neighbourhood, and disperse the little bands of Turkish partisans which remained.

The Turks had fled westward in the direction of Hermedji; but General Gourko had to remain in Kazanlik, where he established his head-quarters, till the 8th Corps, occupying the defiles of the Balkans, could pass through them and mass with supplies, for further progress. His first care was to render the Shipka Pass as secure as possible from any future attack of the Turks. With this object in view, for some days his soldiers worked with remarkable activity, and intrenchments sprung up on all sides almost as if by enchantment. Twenty-five redoubts were thus constructed, and in one of them was placed the artillery taken from the Turks on July 19. One brigade ultimately occupied this vast intrenched camp, and an enormous quantity of ammunition and provisions was accumulated in the event of a long siege.

The road over the Shipka Pass was, at first, only practicable for vehicles drawn by bullocks, but nearly 2000 men were speedily engaged in improving it. An arrangement was made with the deputies of all the villages between Gabrova and Shipka, by which it was agreed that each village should contribute a certain number of men for the work, the Russian authorities furnishing the tools. On the 22nd of July two officers arrived from the Emperor, bringing to General Gourko the White Cross of St. George, and the appointment as Aide-de-camp General to the Czar.

On the 21st and 22nd of July the Bulgarian inhabitants of Eski Saghra, Yeni Saghra, and Philippopolis sent messengers asking the Russians

to push on, as they were in daily terror of their lives, and it was reported that the Turkish authorities were making every effort to concentrate a force in front of the Russians. But owing to the difficulty of the road and the movements of the Turkish forces north of the Balkans, reinforcements came but slowly through the Pass, and the advance of the Russian troops was thus delayed.

A detachment consisting of the Kazan dragoons, some horse artillery, and a sotnia of Cossacks, was, however, sent on the 22nd July to occupy Eski Saghra, in compliance with the request of the inhabitants. Received with enthusiasm by the Bulgarian population, this force took possession of the telegraph office, cut the wires, collected all the arms in the town, and established its bivouac there.

On the 23rd the regiment of Astrachan dragoons, a section of the 16th horse battery, and some sotnias of the 21st regiment of Don Cossacks, commanded by Colonel Matsioulevitch, were sent with Lieutenant-colonel Soukhotine, chief of the staff, from Kazanlik through Eski Saghra towards the railway station of Karabunar; at the same time the regiment of Kazan dragoons, a section of the 16th horse battery, and a sotnia of the 26th regiment of Don Cossacks, were directed upon the station at Kaïadjik. These two detachments were instructed to destroy the railway at these stations, and obtain information concerning the Turks. The regiment of hussars, with two guns, and the two brigades of the Bulgarian Legion, were sent upon Eski Saghra.

On the 24th the detachments charged with breaking up the railway arrived at the stations determined on. Colonel Matsioulevitch's detachment was thus distributed:—A mixed squadron of Cossacks and dragoons, commanded by Baron Rosen, aide-de-camp to the Emperor, proceeded with a section of sappers and miners to Kaizarli and Belibreg, with orders to destroy the railway in a descent upon Karabunar. A squadron of dragoons and a section of sappers and miners, commanded by Major Bovetsinsky, proceeded from Arabodjikioi through Hidjal to Souroumo, to destroy the line in the neighbourhood of the latter place, and if possible, to push on as far as the bridge over the Maritza at Tirnova—the junction of the Jamboli and Philippopolis lines. The remaining squadrons, which, with the artillery and another section of sappers and miners, formed the centre

column, advanced upon Karabunar through Azabli.

The line was broken up between Kaizarli and Karabunar; but the station itself at the latter place could not be destroyed, as the centre and right columns there encountered a strong detachment of Turks composed of three or four infantry battalions, and several squadrons of Circassians and cavalry—partly posted at the station itself, and partly in the neighbourhood of Saïmenli and Nidjoi. After having taken up a position in front of the Turks at nine o'clock in the morning, Colonel Matsioulevitch skilfully disguised the numerical weakness of his column, and remained there until two in the afternoon, when the explosions of a series of mines placed on a line which extended for more than twelve miles, by the detachments of Baron Rosen and the principal column, apprised him that the task assigned to it was accomplished.

The Turks in position at Karabunar had only attempted a diversion on the side of the road on which the explosions took place, and had endeavoured to harass the Russian flanks. They were prevented from accomplishing these objects by some pelotons of dragoons, which were quickly sent to the right and left. At two o'clock in the afternoon the outposts were recalled, and the column commenced its march to Eski Saghra. Five bridges, three culverts, the line of telegraph, the guard-houses, and the railway for a long distance, had been entirely destroyed.

Meantime the Kazan regiment of dragoons, a section of artillery, and a sotnia of Cossacks, under the command of Colonel Korévo, arrived at the station of Kaïadjik, on the railway from Philippopolis. After having routed some Bashibazouks—which the squadron accomplished by swimming across the Maritza—the detachment established itself on the left bank, and sent a party of sappers to destroy the railway. The station, with all its outhouses, and the railway for a distance of several miles, were entirely destroyed. The telegraphic apparatus, with some despatches, were seized, and the station-master was arrested. The detachment afterwards returned to Eski Saghra.

The two columns brought back some information as to the enemy, obtained by questions addressed to the inhabitants, and by means of scouts. This information was to the effect that

there were at Karabunar from four to six battalions of Turks, and several hundred Circassians and cavalry; that Turkish troops were concentrating at Tirnova and at Saïmenli, and that the railway from Adrianople was also rapidly transporting troops to the front.

No further attempt to advance was made by the Russians until the 29th of July, and during the delay important events were taking place south of the Balkans and at the Turkish capital. As described in a previous chapter, the Turkish defence had been originally intrusted to Abdul Kerim Pasha, the Serdar Ekrem or Commander-in-chief, and considerable confidence was placed in his ability—a confidence which subsequent events failed to justify. It is believed that his intention was to act simply on the defensive, and by awaiting the Russians in strong positions to divide and exhaust them. After the declaration of war, it would have been possible for the Turks to have very considerably retarded the Russian advance; but the Turkish Commander made no movement, and we know that the Russians were able to take up their positions upon the north bank of the Danube without the least hindrance. It was then considered that at all events the Danube would be resolutely held, and form a strong line of defence; but the Russians crossed into the Dobrudscha with scarcely any hindrance, and when the Turkish Ministers inquired of Abdul Kerim the reason, he replied that he had abandoned the Dobrudscha on strategical grounds, and was not at all surprised at the Russian advance. But when the second crossing took place at Sistova, and no attack in force was made by the Commander, considerable alarm was felt at Constantinople; and when Abdul Kerim, in reply to the inquiries as to what he was doing, replied that to permit the Russians to cross formed part of his "plan," he was called upon to submit its details to the Turkish Government. This, however, he stoutly refused to do, saying that if confidence were not reposed in him, he had better be superseded, but it was a military necessity that his plan should be kept secret. He added that no alarm need be felt at the onward march of the Russians, as he had only permitted it in order the more effectually to destroy them.

This reply was considered very unsatisfactory by the Sultan, and a special meeting of the Turkish Ministers was called to consider what should be done. Abdul Kerim was supported by the Turkish

Minister for war, Redif Pasha, but the other Ministers expressed their want of confidence in him; and in the end, it was decided that Redif Pasha should go to the front to confer personally with the Commander-in-chief, and with him was sent an experienced soldier, Namyk Pasha, who was charged to make a report of the state of the army and the means of defence.

At this time Prince Hassan, son of the Khedive of Egypt, who had been sent to Varna with the Egyptian contingent, forwarded to the Sultan a gloomy account of the Turkish army, and warned him against reposing confidence in the Minister for War or the Commander-in-chief; and the report made by Namyk Pasha was scarcely more satisfactory. So long, however, as the second line of defence, formed by the Balkans, was intact, the Turkish Minister felt comparatively safe; but when this line was broken by the advance of the Russian force under General Gourko, all confidence in the Minister for War or the Commander-in-chief was at an end, and for a time there was a great panic at the Turkish capital. At first an attempt was made to deny the fact, and the Vali of Adrianople affirmed that what had been taken for a Russian column was only a band of Bulgarian insurgents. The truth could not, however, long be concealed, especially as every train from Adrianople brought to the capital a crowd of emigrants—Turks flying before the Russians, and Christians dreading massacre—who circulated dreadful rumours, and gave as facts all the phantoms with which fear had peopled their imagination. The panic thus created so frightened the Government, that they ordered the railway employés to receive, in future, only passengers provided with a *teskére* (passport), indicating both the object of their journey and their means of subsistence.

Fearing a popular rising, the Porte at last thought it best to state the whole truth, and to re-assure the population by an official note addressed to all the newspapers. In this note it was admitted that a Russian division had crossed the Balkans by the Hain-Boghaz defile, and were menacing Yeni Saghra and Eski Saghra.

Upon the receipt of this news, said the official note, prompt measures were taken to increase the strength of the forces already upon the spot, by the despatch of fresh troops from the capital, and, with God's help, to drive back the aggressors. Precise and imperative orders had been sent by

telegraph to his Excellency, Raouf Pasha, Minister of Marine, to put into execution, with the utmost activity, the measures best calculated to arrest and repel the invasion. The Ministers sat night and day at the Seraskierat, constantly occupied in communicating with the commanders of the *corps d'armée*, and displayed the greatest zeal and activity in preparing and sending forward everything necessary for the requirements of the army. Confident in the divine Providence, they hoped shortly to see the districts invaded free from the presence of the enemy; for in such exceptional circumstances it was quite possible for the military situation to vary from day to day. There was no need to give way to apprehensions on account of the passage of a small division of the enemy across the Balkans. To unite with courage and patience in a sentiment of union and confidence in Providence, to contribute to the efforts put forth by the Government—such was the sacred duty of all. The inhabitants of Constantinople would understand, in their own interest, the importance of these counsels, and that the time had come for them to join the populations of the provinces, in showing their love for fatherland by hastening to the scene of the struggle for its defence; to abandon, if necessary, wives and children, and not to recoil before any sacrifice, in order to uphold the honour of the Ottoman name. All those who wished to inscribe themselves under the banners of the battalions of volunteers, whose creation had been recently decreed, would thus prove before all their zeal and fidelity, and for so doing would be considered and treated by their Padishah as his own children. "We appeal, then, to all brave hearts to come and enrol themselves amongst the defenders of the fatherland, and hasten to assist their brothers, the soldiers in the field, in repelling the invading enemy." This note did not have the effect of inducing many of the inhabitants of the capital to enrol themselves as volunteers; but the general anxiety was somewhat allayed when it was seen that the energetic measures announced had really been taken.

Abdul Kerim was deprived of his command, and the Minister for War, Redif Pasha, was dismissed from office; and on July 23 the Turkish official journal published a notice stating that the passage of the Danube, effected without difficulty by the Russians at Sistova, and their march into the interior of the country, and across the

Balkans, reflected so seriously on the military honour of the Commander-in-chief and the War Minister, that the Government had decided to put them both on their trial.

Relieved from the despotic Redif Pasha, the Ministry he had so long kept in subjection showed that it no more despaired of the country than had the violent Redif himself. Adrianople was hastily fortified by earthworks, admirably designed, and well fitted for serious resistance. The forts around Constantinople were also strengthened and extended with all speed.

The post vacated by Abdul Kerim was conferred on Mehemet Ali Pasha, a man of German origin, but who had entered the service of the Turkish Government early in life, and who had, as described in a previous chapter, been previously engaged in the operations against the Montenegrins. He took the command of the army north of the Balkans; but the title of Serdar Ekrem was withheld, though his post was nominally that of Commander-in-chief. The Turkish Minister of Marine, Raouf Pasha, was placed in command of the army south of the Balkans; and, in addition, Suleiman Pasha, whose movements in Montenegro we have previously recorded, was recalled, and ordered to bring with him the greater part of his forces. For this purpose the necessary transports were quickly sent, and on the 19th of July Suleiman Pasha landed at Dédé-Aghatch, and the transports with his army arrived within a few hours after him. Dédé-Aghatch is a small place on the sea coast some ten miles west of Enos, and is the terminus of the railway to Adrianople—to which city all the Montenegrin troops were at once forwarded.

At a review of his soldiers by Suleiman Pasha, shortly after their arrival, an incident took place which is worthy of record as an indication of the spirit animating the Turkish troops at this period. One of the men came out from the ranks, and bowing to the ground before Suleiman, said, "Efendim, we who have conquered in Montenegro, beg you to make known to our lord the Sultan, that we swear this land which our ancestors have given us shall never be defiled by the enemy." Immediately there was a unanimous shout of "Yes, Yes," "We swear it," and "Long live the Sultan!"

In addition to the army of Montenegro, all the troops which landed at Constantinople—including

Zeibecks, Syrians, Kurds, Arabs, and Negroes—were immediately sent forward. They were chiefly improvised soldiers, but for whom the veteran troops from Montenegro formed an excellent nucleus. For several days passenger trains were suspended upon the line to Adrianople, and its rolling stock was devoted exclusively to the conveyance of troops and war *matériel*.

It will be seen, therefore, that while the Russian General in possession of the Shipka Pass was waiting for sufficient troops to resume his march towards Adrianople, the Turkish Government were concentrating large forces before him, with the intention of driving the Russians back through the Balkans, and at the least preserving that line of defence intact. In their attempt to carry out this object the Turks were peculiarly favoured by the possession of a line of railway from Constantinople to Adrianople, and from that town to Philippopolis and Jamboli. This means of communication gave the Turkish Government great facilities for the rapid despatch of troops to the southern front of the Balkans; and when on the 21st July Suleiman Pasha arrived at Adrianople, he displayed great energy in sending forward the forces under his command. In fact, owing to his being altogether untrammelled, and to his acting with the greatest decision, he succeeded in transporting the bulk of the forces under his command from Adrianople to Karabunar in the short space of forty-eight hours. Having completed his preliminary arrangements, the General gave the order to advance, and without delay the divisions massed rapidly on the railway station at Adrianople. The soldiers crowded the trains from end to end, each man with his ammunition in his pouches, three days' biscuit in his haversack, and a full water bottle. Trains followed each other in quick succession, and the troops were drawn up in the neighbourhood of the station at Karabunar. Then, as the provisions followed, the men were brought down to unload the trucks and distribute the rations amongst the various divisions of the force. The troops placed at Suleiman Pasha's disposal amounted to fifty battalions, of whom 25,000 men were veterans who had fought under his command in Montenegro, and who were generally tall and erect in stature, and thoroughly hardened and seasoned by their previous campaign.

Previously to the crossing of the Balkans by the Russians, the position of the Turkish forces

south of the range of mountains had been as follows:—When the news first came that the Russians were in force at Gabrova, it was supposed by the Turkish officials that they would attempt the passage of the Shipka, where the excellent road seemed to afford every facility. At the same time the passage at Slivno had to be watched by the Turks, as keeping open their communications with Shumla, in the event of the northern Turkish armies having to co-operate or form a junction with the southern. With these objects in view two armies were rapidly despatched to these places; the army of defence for the Shipka being between that Pass and Kazanlik, and the army for the defence of the Slivno, at the village of Slivno—the whole under the command of Raouf Pasha, Minister of Marine, who, as has been previously stated, was suddenly despatched from the Admiralty to take active service in the field. At Kazanlik there were about 4000 men; at Slivno about 16,000, while a third army corps was collected at Yeni Saghra. We have already described how the Russians disconcerted these arrangements by making use of the little-known Hainkoi Pass, and were thus able to take the forces defending the Shipka Pass in the rear. After the Russians had secured the two Passes, the Turkish forces were gathered together by Raouf Pasha, who made Yeni Saghra his headquarters, and there waited for the arrival of Suleiman Pasha. His force at that time amounted at first to only 5500 infantry and 1000 cavalry, which was further increased to about 10,000 men, but a great part of the increase consisted of irregular troops and men of the reserve. The greatest uncertainty prevailed on both sides as to the number and position of the opposing forces; the Turks believing the strength of the Russian advance to be much greater than it was in reality, and General Gourko being equally ill informed as to the numbers opposed to any onward movement.

After the capture of the Shipka Pass, General Gourko allowed his troops, who had well earned it, ten days' rest, which he employed in fortifying the defiles he had gained, in organizing his commissariat, and preparing for a new expedition.

By the 29th of July, in the opinion of General Gourko, sufficient Russian troops had passed the mountains to justify an advance upon Yeni Saghra, and he accordingly set out from Kazanlik at daybreak on that day. He was aware of the

fact that Raouf Pasha held the town with a force of 10,000 men, but was not aware of the proximity of Suleiman Pasha. His object was to disperse the corps which the former commanded, and to prevent, as long as he possibly could, the concentration of the troops which the latter was bringing from Adrianople.

General Gourko divided his troops into three columns. That which he himself accompanied was the centre, and consisted of a brigade of infantry composed of the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th battalions of tirailleurs—a brigade which had been in the front ranks from the crossing of the Danube—and which had already taken part in five engagements with the enemy. The infantry was under the command of General Swetzinsky. Besides the tirailleurs there were two batteries of Cossack field artillery, two batteries of mountain guns, and the 21st regiment of Cossacks.

The left column was to leave Hain-Boghaz and march by another route on Yeni Saghra, under the command of General Boreisha, and it consisted of five battalions of infantry—three of the 33rd regiment and two of the 34th—half a regiment of Cossacks, and two batteries of field artillery.

The right column was formed of the troops stationed at Eski Saghra, these being the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th battalions of the Bulgarian Legion, with six field and four mountain guns, and three regiments of cavalry, the Kazan and Astrachan dragoons, and the Kieff hussars; General Stolletoff being in command of the infantry, and Prince Nicholas of Leuchtenberg in command of the cavalry. It was intended that the right column should march by the road from Eski Saghra to Yeni Saghra, and there join with the centre and the left columns in an united attack upon the enemy's position.

The central column started from Kazanlik at 3.30 in the morning of the 29th, and with but one or two short halts marched until past midnight; deducting halts the march was one of seventeen hours. Yet one ambulance waggon was sufficient to contain all who were unable to march to the end, though there was some straggling. Notwithstanding the great fatigue caused by the march, the advance was ordered at four o'clock in the morning of the 30th. The road was for some distance over the crest of oak-scrub covered hills. The scrub was only about the height of a man, and the path through it often not more than

two feet broad; and the difficulty of the advance of the troops with guns was therefore very great. At first the road had been only steep or rough, but afterwards it became perilous as well. In some places horsemen and foot soldiers had to proceed in Indian file, while the guns and limber waggons were dragged along with one wheel on the path, the other at an acute angle on the mountain side. Every few minutes the guns would give a lurch which threatened to drag them and the horses attached to them down the steep bank into the ravine. Ropes were slung to the sides, whilst the men painfully dragged themselves through the oak scrub, and held on to prevent the waggons and cannon from falling into the gulf below. The passage of the Lower Balkans by this unknown Pass was no less difficult than that of the higher and more northerly range; but the troops were obliged to march against time, and despite their weariness and short rest, they worked with cheerful alacrity.

The left column started from Hain-Boghaz at two o'clock on the afternoon of the 29th, and marching eastwards to Oresari, entered the Medzelik Mountains by striking southwards to Lidza, where it bivouacked for the night. Leaving Lidza about four in the morning, it crossed the Tunja river, and by a narrow defile reached Kortac about seven o'clock in the morning of the 30th, and was joined shortly after by the centre column under General Gourko.

Before proceeding to narrate the military proceedings which led to the capture of Yeni Saghra, it may be stated that the town lies on the southern skirt of a broad plain, which widens as it extends from an inclosing spur of the Balkans on the north-east down to Eski Saghra on the south-west. Just behind, to the southwards of Yeni Saghra, is the railway from Jamboli to Adrianople, and two miles south of the railway hills rise with gentle slope to higher mountains still farther southwards and eastwards. Between Yeni Saghra and the ridge of the Lower Balkans there were wide fields and meadows admirably cultivated, while on the north-east and south-west were plantations which gave pleasant variety to the landscape. The town itself is almost hidden by encircling trees; and beyond three minarets, and one or two tall houses, including the railway station, there was nothing even quite close to the place which would indicate a town of any size.

Although the Russians had advanced so near, the Turkish general, Raouf Pasha, was unaware of their proximity; and on the morning of the 30th, leaving a force of about 1500 men to hold the town, he left Yeni Saghra at daybreak with 7500 men, and marched towards Eski Saghra, with the intention of forming a junction with Suleiman Pasha, who was timed to be at that place on the 31st of July. His forces had only left Yeni Saghra a few hours when the Russians reached the edge of the hills looking down upon it. Communication having been established between the left and the centre columns, General Gourko ordered the former to commence the attack. Just at this time smoke commenced to rise in dense volumes from the town. This was the Bulgarian quarter being fired by the Turks as a preliminary to the battle. General Boreisha, taking advantage of a somewhat zigzag road from Kortac to the north, east of Yeni Saghra, got into position about eight o'clock, when his batteries of field artillery, having unlimbered in a meadow, opened fire. The Cossacks were sent to the left, while two battalions of the 33rd regiment were extended as skirmishers, supported by the third battalion of the same regiment; the two battalions of the 34th regiment forming the second line. The Turkish troops had taken up a position for defence along the line of railway, the centre being the station and sheds, strengthened by a long line of carriages and waggons to the right. A battery of artillery was placed in position behind the railway—three guns to the right, and three to the left. Northwards, that is, in front of the station, they had thrown up intrenchments, which embraced the station and outworks in the shape of the letter A, with the apex somewhat flattened. These intrenchments were defended by four battalions, while two more were held in reserve in rear of the artillery; communication being kept up with the troops to the south of the railway by means of an underhead bridge south-east of the station. The Turkish front, therefore, was effectually protected by the town, and could only be attacked by forces coming down from the right and left. From the first the fire of the Turkish artillery was intermittent, and not well served. The 33rd Russian regiment, extending in line, marched down upon the intrenchments of the Turks, and opened a heavy fire, supported by Boreisha's artillery. The third or fourth shell set fire to the

railway station, and the fifth dismounted a Turkish gun. Behind their intrenchments the Turkish infantry had a great advantage over their assailants—an advantage which was considerably increased by the fact that for the most part they were armed with Martini-Henry, Peabody, and Remington small-bore rifles. But notwithstanding these facts, their fire was irregular and weak. While the 33rd Russian regiment was advancing upon the intrenchments, the Cossacks of the left column attempted to outflank the Turkish column; but being only a couple of hundred lances, and meeting with a large force of mounted Circassians, they were forced to retire with the loss of their commandant. Meantime the non-appearance of the Russian right column was accounted for by the sound of guns away down the valley, which showed that they were engaged with another force of the Turks. While the left column was advancing from the north-east, the centre had been getting into position on the left of the village of Egliani. The 12th and 13th battalions of tirailleurs had been extended right and left of a winding road, which led from the foot of the mountains to the west side of the town of Yeni Saghra; the artillery and cavalry marching up this roadway for half a mile. Then the artillery debouched into a stubble field on the right side of the road, while the tirailleurs took ground still farther westwards; the Cossacks of the 21st regiment covering the right flank, which rested on a small brook; the 15th battalion of tirailleurs forming the second line, while the reserve, consisting of the 16th battalion and the mountain guns, were stationed in the village of Egliani. In the order named the centre column advanced without opposition; indeed, its advance was covered by the town from the observation of the Turks till it reached the road leading from Yeni Saghra to Eski Saghra. Here the column changed front, the right flank being brought round so as to rest almost on the line of railway, while the artillery took up a position on the verge of an old Turkish cemetery, the left flank, taking advantage of cross streets, getting to the front under cover. The Turks were thence assailed on both sides of their intrenchments, and the artillery fire of the Russian centre column was no less effective than that of the left. The moment the Russian troops got to the town, the Bulgarians who had remained at once procured brands from

their own burning houses, set fire to the Turkish quarter, and in a few minutes the whole town was in flames. At ten o'clock the centre column came upon the Turkish left, just as there was an inclination to waver on the Russian left, a Turkish shell having burst in the first line and caused considerable loss, 30 men being wounded and 6 killed. Line was, however, reformed with admirable alacrity, the officers of the 33rd rushing forward in brilliant style, cheering their men, and anew leading the advance with great heroism; while the artillery of the left changed position from the first meadow in which the guns had been located, and advancing nearer the Turkish intrenchments, again opened fire with much effect. About noon the charge was ordered, and the Russian riflemen, covered by a rapid artillery fire, rushed forward with cheers, jumped the intrenchments, and drove the Turks at the point of the bayonet from their defences. Once compelled to evacuate the cover of their breastworks, the Turks retreated in a stampede, running across the railway below the archway before referred to, and away towards the mountains, throwing aside their arms, greatcoats, and everything which could encumber their flight. It must be borne in mind, however, that the Turkish numbers were far inferior to the Russian. As soon as the Turks retreated, a regiment and a half of Cossacks were sent in pursuit, and captured two Krupp guns, and another Krupp without its limber waggons, while large quantities of munitions and provisions also fell into the hands of the Russians. But as they did not consider it advisable to persevere with the pursuit, the Cossacks were recalled about two o'clock. The Turkish loss was 250 wounded, and they left between 80 and 100 dead in the intrenchments. The Russian loss reached 80 killed and 150 wounded. A hundred prisoners were taken by the Russians, and two flags. The train of waggons and carriages which had formed a screen for the Turkish artillery on the right was found to contain munitions; and when General Gourko and his staff came upon the scene of action he ordered that they should be destroyed, and that the station-houses and outbuildings should be blown up. This was accordingly done about two o'clock, and then news having reached General Gourko that the Turks were in force between Yeni Saghra and Eski Saghra, he decided to make a forced march in their direction. The Russian General accordingly ordered that the troops of the

middle column, who were thoroughly worn out with their long and fatiguing march and their fight of the day, should be sent to the village of Egliani, there to rest and bivouac during the night, and that the comparatively fresh soldiers of the 33rd and 34th regiments, with their artillery, should lead the advance in the direction of the enemy. General Rauch, who was second in command of the whole army, was despatched to take command of the troops at Eski Saghra—he and a small staff making his way thither by way of the Lower Balkans. Between four and five o'clock the column was put in motion, and a second weary march began, General Gourko having determined to endeavour to reach Karabunar, a village about eight miles from Yeni Saghra, and there, unless the Turks attacked, bivouac during the night. But the excessive strain that had been put upon the troops was beginning to tell, and before half the distance had been accomplished the men began to inquire when they would stop. Even before darkness fell many dropped out of the ranks unable to proceed. They laid themselves down on the roadside to rest and sleep; but it was noticed that these men, when rested, at once went on, and as soon as possible joined the ranks of their own corps. Karabunar* was reached by the main part of the troops about nine o'clock, and there halted for the night. Throughout the entire route the Russians found the country completely devastated; the Turks in their retreat having burnt all the villages, and massacred many inhabitants.

The march was resumed early on the morning of the 31st. A detachment of Cossacks formed the advanced guard, followed by a battery of Cossack field artillery; while the 34th regiment, of the 9th Division, was in front of the infantry, closely followed by the 33rd with the artillery. A march of about two miles brought the Russians in sight of the town of Dalboka, where was posted the army of Raouf Pasha, who, during the night, had rallied his troops which had been defeated at Yeni Saghra, and rejoining the detachment which had stopped the march of the Russian column from Eski Saghra—as will be presently seen—had posted himself across the road in a strong position; but who had not yet succeeded in opening communication with Suleiman Pasha.

* This place, situated on the road from Yeni Saghra to Eski Saghra, must not be confused with another of the same name, situated on the railway from Yeni Saghra to Hirmanli. It was at the latter place that Suleiman Pasha had fixed his head-quarters.

General Gourko had sent forward the Cossack artillery, attended by a squadron of lancers, to feel for the enemy, and these were received by the Turks with a fire of artillery. The Turks had taken up a splendid position, and one from which at the very first the Russians saw it would be extremely difficult to dislodge them. The Turkish design was to remain strictly on the defensive, and also to prevent as far as possible the advance of Russian troops further along the road. To attain this they had posted themselves in and around a large wood, which extended in an oblique direction across the plain, from a point nearly half a mile south of the road, and in a straight line with the Mediven Mountain, in front of the village of Dzurani, whose minarets could be seen peeping above the trees, to a point half way between the road and the village of Samlu. Their front formed almost the outer arc of a half circle—the north-west, or left flank, being protected by a mound and a thick impenetrable wood; the ground towards their centre was wooded, but more open; while their right flank, to the south-east, was also protected by plantations, affording greater cover than those near the centre, but not so thick as those on the left. Following the outline of the wood, but about two or three miles from it, were four mounds, which formed in a rough way the marked features of the Russian front. On the right of one nearest to Eski Saghra, and also to the road, the Cossack artillery was posted. General Gourko took up a position with his staff on the central mound; while on the other side, the battery attached to the Rudolph regiments—the 33rd and 34th—left the road and echeloned to the left, taking up their first position between the mound on the left and the small plantation in front of the village of Samlu.

The action was commenced by the Turkish artillery, which, to prevent the advance of the Russians towards Eski Saghra, commenced to shell the road furiously; and shell after shell fell with admirable precision for the space of three or three and a half miles in the immediate vicinity of the main line of communication between Yeni Saghra and Eski Saghra. The Turkish fire was answered by the Russian artillery, while under cover of the artillery fire the Russian infantry were being brought into order of battle. The 33rd regiment had been in the first line on the previous day at Yeni Saghra, and the 34th in the second; their

places were changed on the 31st, and the 34th was ordered to extend and lead the attack. As the tirailleur companies of the first line of the Russians extended as skirmishers, and opened fire in the direction of the wood, there was a response from the Turkish infantry under cover of the trees and the brushwood; and the Russian troops in line were ordered to lie down in the little depressions of the ground or among the crops, while there was an exchange of shots with the artillery stationed both on the right and left. This being observed by the Turks, they advanced three battalions of infantry, supported by a large force of Circassian cavalry on their right, and a battery of artillery on their left, out of the thin wood in the centre of their position towards the open ground. Their advance was splendid, and displayed equal bravery to that of the Russians. The Turkish artillery opened a tremendous fire all along the line, and the Turkish infantry seconded their efforts by rapid platoon firing from their Peabody and Martini breechloaders. The Russian tirailleurs held their ground for a time, but were at last compelled to fall back on their supports. In a short time, however, they rallied, and led on by their officers, who displayed the greatest bravery, they charged the advancing Turkish forces, who in turn gave way, and retired to the shelter of the wood, from which they poured such a heavy fire upon the Russians as to compel them again to retire, and seek shelter in their turn. Thus for about an hour there was a lull, and then the Turks began extending their front on the right, with the view of turning the Russian left. To prevent this the Rudolph regiments were ordered to take ground to the left, while the artillery shelled the wood where the Turks were extending their line, and thus checked the outflanking movement. But on the part of the Turks a battery was unmasked on the right, immediately behind the small mound due south of the mountain of Mediven, and opened a heavy fire on the Cossack battery on the right. To this fire the Russian battery replied very slowly and feebly, although a persistent and well-directed fire was kept up by the tirailleurs on the right, who had crept up quite close to the Turkish lines. The Cossack battery's ammunition had become exhausted, and as the Turks perceived this, they sent a large force of Circassians to the Russian right, extending along the road and up the slopes of Mediven, on

which the Cossack artillery was ordered to retire. When the Turks observed this movement of the Cossacks they renewed their fire with redoubled energy, and the shells fell fast among the Cossacks, ploughing up the ground on all sides, and causing much loss. The position of the Russians now began to look critical, and an orderly was despatched at speed to hurry up General Swetzinsky with the troops which, as has been already described, had bivouacked at Egliani during the night, after their two days' terrible march, and which consisted of the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th battalions of tirailleurs, with two batteries of artillery and the two batteries of mountain guns. While awaiting their approach, in order to prevent the advance of the Circassians and the crushing of the right flank, the Russian right was extended in a north-westerly direction, and kept up a continued fire upon the Turks, who had been gradually advancing from the thick wood, and spreading outwards, had delivered well-directed volleys upon the Russian lines. On the Russian left the artillery ammunition was becoming exhausted; and as twenty-eight horses out of the battery had been killed, two guns had to retire, and the Turks formed line and advanced upon the Russian infantry. The remaining guns of the Russian left battery renewed their fire, and a shell falling right in the Turkish line caused great havoc, the confusion resulting from which was seized by General Boreisha to order the advance. This order was responded to with great courage by the Russians, and a second time the Turks retreated into the wood. Soon afterwards, to the intense joy of their comrades, the four Russian battalions and two batteries under General Swetzinsky came up, marching as firmly as if just leaving their barracks. The four battalions of tirailleurs, which had formed the infantry brigade of the centre column on the previous day, were brought forward with all haste, and one battery of artillery was at once ordered to the right, to take the place of the Cossack artillery which had been compelled to retire; and the battery, advancing amidst a storm of shells, opened fire upon the Turkish left. With the arrival of the troops from Egliani also came more ammunition, and a waggon was sent over to the Russian left wing for the use of the weakened battery there, whose ammunition, as we have said, was nearly exhausted. The Turkish battery again commenced a vigor-

ous fire, which was replied to by the Russians by the aid of the fresh ammunition; and an explosion of a powder magazine took place in the Turkish lines. Taking advantage of the confusion caused by this, the Russian General Boreisha led a charge into the wood and drove out the Turks, thus gaining a victory for the Russian left, though at a heavy sacrifice of men. Much bravery was displayed in this attack on the wood. The colonel of one of the regiments, seeing his men hesitate under the storm of bullets, seized the colours and sprung forward in advance, crying out, "Let us see who will dare to remain behind." With an enthusiastic shout his men threw themselves after him, and repulsed the Osmanli who had accumulated. Whilst encouraging his men in the attack General Boreisha was wounded, and the colonel and more than half the officers of the 33rd regiment were killed or wounded.

The Russian right, however, was in imminent danger, as there the Turkish Commander poured in his reserves, and what the German military *attaché* described as the most terrible musketry fire he had ever seen or heard, ensued. The Russian infantry found it impossible to advance; and the Turks sent forward in addition a mass of Circassian cavalry, 3000 strong, who, crossing the highway from behind the wood, wheeled and sought to overwhelm the rear of the Russian force, and cut off its retreat. These Circassians were armed with the Winchester repeating rifle, and they advanced firing with great rapidity. The fate of the battle, and of the whole Russian right, hung in the balance; when, just at the critical moment, Prince Leuchtenberg's cavalry, consisting of three squadrons of Astrachan dragoons and of Kieff hussars, who had cut their way through the Turkish force investing Eski Saghra, came riding down on the Circassians. Right and left of the road the Circassians had extended when the Russian cavalry charged into their midst. The Circassians received them with a volley from their Winchester rifles, but it was hurriedly given and had but little effect; whilst, aided by their superior weight and strength, the Russian cavalry—the hussars on the right and the dragoons on the left—broke right through their opponents, and the Circassians turned and fled.

This daring cavalry charge turned the scale in favour of the Russians, whose tirailleurs advanced at a rapid rate and effected the discom-

fiture of the Turkish left wing. The Turkish army was soon in rapid retreat, pursued by the Russian cavalry. The Turkish Commander, Raouf Pasha, had been wounded early in the affair; but though he remained on the field until the Turks retired, he could not succeed in maintaining an orderly retreat, and his army fled in wild confusion. The victory, though, had been gained at a terrible cost to the Russians; there having been not less than 2000 killed and wounded, including a large number of officers. The greatest suffering was endured by the wounded, as the ambulances were undermanned, and were for part of the time under fire. It may be mentioned here that great gallantry was shown by two English newspaper correspondents, Mr. Hall, the artist of the *Illustrated London News*, and Mr. Rose, the correspondent of the *Scotsman* (from the latter's account of the battle many of the above details are derived), in succouring the wounded. They assisted the surgeons to wash and bandage, and when the water fell short, they volunteered to go to a well 500 yards distant, and under fire, which the Russian soldiers refused to approach until emboldened by the example of the English gentlemen referred to.

In order to explain the arrival of the Russian cavalry, it will be necessary to describe the fate of the right column of General Gourko's force. This column, as has been stated, consisted of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th battalions of the Bulgarian Legion, under the command of General Stolletoff, and three regiments of cavalry, under Prince Leuchtenberg, with six field and four mountain guns. This force had been stationed at Eski Saghra since the 20th of July. Orders had been sent for this detachment to advance and join the centre and left column in the attack on Yeni Saghra on the 30th of July; but, as already shown, it failed to arrive. The column started from Eski Saghra on the 29th of July, and succeeded in advancing some distance on the road, when it encountered a large body of Turkish troops forming part of the army of Raouf Pasha. The Turkish General immediately opened a heavy artillery fire from three batteries posted against the road. The Russian column made several attempts to force the passage; but the Turkish fire was so heavy and effective that the Russians gave up the attempt, and retired nearly two miles on the road by which they had arrived, and there

bivouacked for the night. On the following morning, the 30th of July, General Stolletoff and Prince Leuchtenberg determined to renew their efforts to join Gourko; and the cavalry, with four mountain guns, were directed to force the passage by way of the mountains on the left, turning the northern slopes of Mediven, while the Bulgarians, throwing out a battalion as tirailleurs, were to make the best of their way by the road. This movement, up to a certain point, was successful; but when nearing the cross roads at Karaula, a heavy fire was opened upon the infantry from all sides, and the six Bulgarian guns were quite unable to withstand the fire which three Turkish batteries poured in upon them. In addition, the cavalry on the heights were encountered by a large force of Circassians, who, with their nimble ponies and Winchester repeating rifles, hovered about the heavy troops—unable to move with freedom in the hills and defiles—almost with impunity. Whilst these attacks were being made the Turks effected a change of front, and endeavoured to surround the Russian force and cut off its retreat. To prevent the success of this movement the Russians were forced to retire this time five miles, to the heights above Eski Saghra, while two battalions of the Bulgarians and two guns were sent into the town itself. On the morning of the 31st General Rauch arrived from Yeni Saghra, having succeeded in effecting the journey by means of the Passes of the Lower Balkans. The General at once took command of the whole column. A council of war was held, and it was decided that General Stolletoff, with the whole of the Bulgarian battalions and the field and mountain guns, should make an attack upon the Turkish forces which were then posted south of Eski Saghra, while three squadrons of dragoons and three of hussars should endeavour to cut their way through to General Gourko's positions.

The success of the latter movement, and the influence it had upon the movements of General Gourko, have already been described. The remainder of the right column, however, was less fortunate. It advanced beyond Eski Saghra to attack the Turkish forces posted near the village of Muradli; but these consisted of the main part of the army of Adrianople, under Suleiman Pasha, who had arrived unknown to the Russians. He sent a portion of his army along the road to

Karabunar to make a demonstration against the Russian column, and prepared to attack the town with eighteen battalions and eighteen pieces of artillery, which he placed thus:—On the left the brigade of Vessel Pasha, in the centre that of Chakir Pasha, and on the right that of Redjib Pasha, who was specially commissioned to burn the town and to seize the road to Kazanlik, by which the Russians would have been able to effect a retreat.

Suleiman Pasha's infantry, after their landing at Dédé-Agatch, as we have before stated, had made several forced marches, night and day, in spite of having, it might almost be said, nothing to eat. Only a few hours' repose, however, was allowed the wearied soldiers, many of whom were bare-footed. They were then harangued, and told that they had now to think of saving the Padishah, that the abhorred Russians wished to destroy Stamboul and give St. Sophia to the flames, and were reminded that all the faithful votaries of Mahomet who fell in battle would go straight to paradise, where they would enjoy eternal pleasures. No more was needed; fatigue and want of food were alike forgotten, and the soldiers closed their ranks to rush with a furious *élan* against the enemy's intrenchments.

The Bulgarians sustained the shock of the large force sent against them with great bravery, and repulsed the first attack; but when they found themselves in danger of being outflanked by Redjib's brigade, many among them proposed falling back in preference to being all taken and massacred to the last man. In this struggle the Russians seemed to hold the lives of their Bulgarian allies somewhat cheap; at all events, the regiment of dragoons which remained occupied itself much more in extricating itself than in protecting the retreat of the Bulgarians. The latter were, in part, saved through a circumstance which in other respects was a disaster. The main street of Eski Saghra being completely in flames, the central Turkish column could not force them backwards, and they had only to combat with Redjib's brigade, the ranks of which they broke through in a desperate attack. More than half the men engaged, however, perished. Out of 496 soldiers making up the 3rd battalion, 207 only remained in the ranks; and out of fourteen officers, five only escaped uninjured. It was this battalion which possessed the standard sent by the

inhabitants of Samara. Three officers were killed successively whilst carrying it. Then Lieutenant-colonel Kalitine seized it to lead on his men, but was almost immediately killed. A fourth and a fifth standard-bearer were next struck, and then the fatal flag was carried from the field of battle by a non-commissioned officer. The Turks, on their side, experienced considerable losses; and acknowledged that 748 men, of whom eighteen were officers, were placed *hors de combat*.

The result of the engagement was that the Russians were obliged to give up all hope of holding the positions they had won south of the Balkans, and preparations were accordingly made to retire through a gorge of the Lower Balkans known as the Eski Saghra Pass. The retreat was only partially successful; for, pursued vigorously by the Circassian cavalry, the Russians sustained great loss, and two of their mountain guns were captured. Of the 1600 Bulgarians who had composed the four infantry battalions, only between 500 and 600 finally succeeded in effecting their retreat, while forty of the Russian officers of the division were killed or wounded. The remainder succeeded in reaching Kazanlik. In the fighting of the 30th and 31st July General Gourko altogether lost 3000 men, excluding the Bulgarians.

Returning to the left and centre columns under General Gourko, it may be remembered that it was the intention of that General to advance to the assistance of the right column as soon as he had gained a victory. The road being cleared by this, General Gourko continued his advance, and about three o'clock in the afternoon of July 31 reached a position from which the town of Eski Saghra was seen in the distance. At that place an orderly, who had succeeded in breaking through the Turkish lines, informed him that their right column (which, as we know, had been reduced by the departure of Prince Nicholas of Leuchtenberg to a regiment of cavalry and four Bulgarian battalions), was hemmed in the town by Suleiman Pasha, whose forces amounted to more than 30,000 men. The Russian General conceived for a moment the project of cutting them out with his small force; but the men were fatigued by a three days' march and by a fight which had lasted since the morning, and he therefore decided that to attempt so perilous a feat under such conditions would be unpardonable folly.

The commander of the advance-guard had committed the same mistake as was being made at exactly the same time by the Russians at Plevna, and had not ascertained the strength of the forces which were opposed to him. He had also divided his troops, already too small in numbers, into two detachments, and was obliged to take the consequences of the mistake. In order not to compromise the safety of the whole army, the right column had, as we have seen, to be left to its fate. A large body of Turks were already threatening the Russian flank; and General Gourko, casting a despairing glance at Eski Saghra, which was burning in the distance, and in which the Bulgarian Legion was being sacrificed, ordered his troops to face about. To prevent a panic, however, it was at first stated that only fresh and more advantageous positions were to be taken up.

It was found impossible to retreat by the Passes through which the columns had marched in the first instance, and it was determined to make the attempt by a sheep track across the mountains above Dalboka, the town which overlooked the plain of the morning's battle-field; and to this place the retreat was ordered. Evening had now come on, and the retreat took place in darkness, a halt being called for a few hours at the base of the mountain. Early in the morning of the following day, August 1, the retreat through the Dalboka Pass commenced, the army being covered by the hussars and dragoons. The Turkish commander was unaware of the smallness of the Russian force; and at first his columns took up a position of defence—thus giving the Russians time to make good their retreat.

The advance of General Gourko, as described in the early part of this chapter, was remarkable for the courage displayed, and the difficulties encountered and overcome; but the retreat was perhaps even more noticeable, both for its daring, being undertaken in the face of an enormously superior force, and for having to overcome the greatest natural obstacles. A detachment of Cossacks led the way, followed by the 33rd and 34th regiments with the wounded, the tirailleurs with the artillery following, and the cavalry covering the rear. Half a mile from Dalboka the path entered a rocky defile—there being on one side a precipice at least 150 feet deep, and on the other rocks rising bare and gaunt to the

height of eighty feet. The path was naturally not more than two feet broad, and the wheels of the waggons conveying the wounded were consequently dragged at a fearfully dangerous angle. Men with ropes scrambled up the rocks, and the ropes being attached to the waggons, they were literally held from falling over the brink as they were dragged slowly along. This was also done with the guns, and the labour of the soldiers was trying in the utmost degree. At one point one of the Turkish guns captured at Yeni Saghra slipped and rolled down the precipice, the strong waggon and carriage being smashed and twisted into a hundred pieces, while the gun itself was rendered useless. At another, the wheel of a Russian gun came off, and the united efforts of a hundred men and a score of horses had to be employed in dragging the disabled field-piece to a place where another wheel could be substituted. Further on, at the head of this defile, a Red Cross waggon was smashed to atoms with all its medical stores, and the horses attached bruised into an undistinguishable mass.

The first range of mountains surmounted was 2000 feet high, and then succeeded a plateau which was soon scattered with deserted wounded horses, broken waggons, camp kettles, and almost everything that could be an encumbrance in flight. The second and third ranges that had to be crossed were even more difficult, the path being in many places the boulder-covered bed of a mountain stream, sometimes dry and sometimes lying in pools. The most terrible sufferings were endured by the wounded, owing to the jolting of the waggons and the excessive heat of July, and great numbers of them died on the journey, and were hastily buried by the way side. Many healthy men, wearied by three days' exertions, also succumbed either through fatigue or sunstroke. There were a few priests with the army, and they had a severe task; but with a self-sacrifice worthy of their office, they were unwearied in their attentions to the sick, the dying, and the dead. While going about from one waggon to another administering comfort here, giving the consolations of his church to the expiring there, or reading the service for the dead, one of these worthy men was seized with apoplexy and died.

Notwithstanding the difficulties and fatigues of the retreat, Lieutenant-colonel Brackenbury ob-

serves that it should not be forgotten how the wearied Russian troops carried away the children of Eski Saghra, Yeni Saghra, and Kazanlik, some on gun carriages, some in their arms, to save them from the Turks, or how others drove a cow with them to feed the little ones with milk, whilst from a big caldron at Shipka was ladled out soup for the starving fugitives.

The Tulovsko plain was reached by the Russians at nightfall, where the army bivouacked, and marched to-Hain Boghaz on the morning of the 2nd of August. On arrival, they took up a position behind the intrenchments and fortifications which had been erected. The advance-guard was soon afterwards broken up; the cavalry, useless in the mountainous country to which it had been obliged to retire, was sent back to the different corps from which it had been drawn, and General Gourko set out for Roumania to meet the 2nd division of the cavalry of the Guard which was just arriving, and of which he was appointed to resume the command.

Thus was brought to a close that extraordinary advance from which so much had been anticipated, and which ended in so much disaster to the Russian cause. Subjoined are the official telegraph accounts published immediately after the events recorded, from which may be seen the different colour given to them by the respective governments. The Russian official report published at St. Petersburg, and dated August 3, was as follows:—

“General Gourko has destroyed the railway line between Jamboli and Philippopolis. On the 30th July he defeated and dispersed a division of the army of Suleiman Pasha which was holding Yeni Saghra, capturing two guns. On the following day he defeated another division of the same army at Schuganli, near Eski Saghra, but fell back on the approach of the whole force of Suleiman Pasha, who drove the Bulgarian militia out of Eski Saghra. General Gourko retreated to the Balkan Passes.”

The Turkish report, published at Constantinople, and dated August 1, stated that:—

“Yesterday (Tuesday) the Russians attacked the corps of Raouf Pasha at Eski Saghra. After seven hours' fighting Raouf Pasha fell back upon Karabunar. Suleiman Pasha the same day, however, repulsed the enemy, and recaptured Eski Saghra, taking several guns from the Russians, and inflicting upon them considerable loss.”

In a thoroughly impartial article, entitled

"Fallacies about the War," and written some months after the events described in this chapter, Lieutenant-colonel Brackenbury, who accompanied General Gourko, gave the following as his deliberate opinion with respect to them:—

"During the course of the campaign there came a time when the Turkish commanders had remained so long in their attitude of passive defence as to relinquish their best chances, and leave to the Russians the power of passing the Balkans, the second and best line of defence—so that there was no force of any magnitude between the invaders and Constantinople. No works were at that time erected to cover the capital, and a rapid advance would have resulted in an immediate occupation of Adrianople, with the capture of all the rich valleys between that city and the Balkans. Unfortunately for Russia, perhaps for Europe, timid counsels were allowed to prevail, and instead of detaining the Turkish armies while the reinforcements were coming up, instead of pushing forward the 8th Corps over the Shipka Pass so as to overawe the already panic-stricken forces in Roumelia, and claim a success ending in an honourable peace, the Russian chiefs threw away the reputation of their arms and the precious lives of their best soldiers by hurling them against the breastworks and batteries of Plevna. A very well-informed officer of the Turkish army in Roumelia has assured me that the dash forward of the 8th Corps must have been crowned with success, for there were but few troops to oppose it, and these were both raw and demoralized. Instead of suffering from constant attacks from Suleiman Pasha, as Radetzky's Corps afterwards did, he might have marched easily to Adrianople, through a rich country, and pushed on Gourko's advanced guard so as to threaten Constantinople, whither Suleiman Pasha must have hurried to save the throne of the Sultan.

"Another prevailing fallacy is that Gourko's march over the Balkans was a 'raid.' If we take the general meaning of a raid and apply it to this case, it will entirely fail to represent the facts. General Gourko's force consisted of a detachment of the three arms, was called 'the advanced guard,' and was destined first to feel the way towards the Balkans, afterwards to pass them by a difficult route, quite impracticable for a large army, then to turn the Turkish defences of the best Pass—

that of the Shipka—and, acting in conjunction with the 8th Corps, to take and hold that Pass. But for the fault of attacking Plevna, the movement would have continued. Two corps would have crossed the Balkans and marched on Adrianople. This cannot be called a raid in any proper sense of the term. It is true that General Gourko exceeded his instructions by moving forward in force instead of merely pushing out cavalry to feel the enemy and break up railways; but I am not prepared to condemn his action as glibly as has been done by some non-professional writers. A considerable Turkish force had been draining the resources of the small tract of country near Kazanlik before the arrival of Gourko; and when I was alone in Kazanlik, on account of the necessity of some time for writing, the chief inhabitants told me that the Russians must push forward soon, for, if not, their stores of flour would quickly become exhausted. In judging the action of this brilliant little force, we must not forget that its activity caused it to be reported at Constantinople as 60,000 strong, instead of its real strength, namely, about 10,000; that it brought about a complete panic south of the Balkans, cleared the way for an advance of the army, and even at the last moment, almost in sight of Suleiman Pasha's strong army, utterly routed and dispersed a force under Raouf Pasha 15,000 strong. Above all, it captured the Shipka Pass, to retake which Suleiman Pasha expended 20,000 men without avail. The importance of Gourko's achievements may be measured by the effect actually produced, and by that which would have been produced if the advance had not been stopped for the attempt on Plevna. The actual and enduring result was the freedom of the Balkans, the defeat of at least 10,000 Turks at different places on the way to Kazanlik, and the defeat and dispersion of a corps of 15,000 Turks between Yeni Saghra and Eski Saghra. This is not the work of a raid; and if Gourko had to retire eventually, it was because the original plan was altered, and he was not supported. In comparing the feats of arms and the generalship on either side, it is impossible to find anything comparable to the work of Gourko and his advanced guard."

Referring to the same subject in a celebrated lecture before the United Service Institution on 30th November, 1877, Mr. Archibald Forbes, the correspondent of the *Daily News*, said:—"The

successful passage of the Balkans by Gourko and Mirski was an event in European history of an actual, and still more of a contingent, importance scarcely second to any occurrence of the century. I need not here dilate on its significance. Yet because it cost but a few hundred men, I am to believe, if I am to judge from the newspapers of the time, that it caused less talk in England—less of what we know under the ugly, vulgar term of “sensation”—than did one day’s fighting at Shipka, where, indeed, blood flowed in torrents, but the interest of which was caused by its horrors, not by its consequences. These, indeed, were combated strenuously by not a few able military critics. The crossing achieved, there remained to utilize the success. Certain facts had to be discovered—where and in what force were Turkish armies? how wide a free margin was there on either flank of the line of advance to the Balkans? what were the prospects of interruption, or the contrary, to that advance? what were the likely dangers to its communications when it had been made? It behoved the Russians the very moment they had made good their footing on the Turkish bank to hurry cavalry across by every exertion, and to spread the horsemen fan-like over the face of Bulgaria. But the Russians essayed no such enterprise. Several days passed before their bridge was practicable, and even then more time elapsed before cavalry in any numbers began to cross. When cavalry did go out into the interior, it was not to scent, to explore, to feel, to report. They went as the heads of columns marching for a given object on a predetermined scheme of action. In truth, they set about building a house without having laid any foundations. Secondly, as to strategy. It must be taken for granted that by this time the Grand-duke and his advisers had realized that the strength of the army on paper and in bayonets meant two very different things. In some degree, at least, it must have come home to them that instead of the invading army numbering 250,000 men, not half that number were waiting the order to file across the bridge at Simnitza. It cannot have been but that they asked themselves whether the altered conditions did not vitiate the original scheme: 60,000 to 70,000 men might have sufficed to cover the left flank of the advance, to mask Rustchuk, and with the co-operation of Zimmermann to keep in check the Turkish field army of the Quadrilateral, if not

indeed to drive it out of the field. But half that number it should have been seen was too weak for the purpose; nor did it contribute to actual strength to designate as two corps a body of soldiers only numerically equal to the nominal strength of one corps. I think most men will admit that a strategic scheme for an army of 250,000 is not likely to suit an army of 150,000. We do not drive a pony in the vehicle built for a dray horse. If the Russian leaders had recognized the necessity for an altered scheme, they must inevitably have found themselves face to face with the decision between two alternative schemes. One, and the safer one, involved the necessity of abandoning, for the time at least, the trans-Balkan expedition, and the concentration, instead, of all the Russian energies on the enterprise of clearing of hostile Turks all Bulgaria north of the Balkans. The alternative was much bolder, involved serious risk, and demanded vigilant and even brilliant generalship. I believe that, granting these postulates, comparatively weak as the Russians were at the crossing, the Grand-duke Nicholas might have reached Adrianople by the middle of August with 60,000 men, had he fortified the bridge-head at Sistova, placed the Roumanians in garrison there and at Nikopol, fortified and garrisoned Tirnova, and left a mobile army of 50,000 men under a general of the right stamp on the line of his communications half way between Sistova and Tirnova—say in Gorni Studen and Gorni Lubnica. Duke Nicholas’ main difficulty would have been to find the general equal to a task demanding real military genius, self-reliance, and above all self-control. Could he have borrowed Prince Frederick Charles, I believe he might have marched on Adrianople with an easy mind. As it was, the original scheme was adhered to, at least as far as circumstances permitted, and success was thus rendered virtually impossible, unless the Turks were to prove more utterly despicable adversaries than even the meanest of their antecedents warranted the anticipation. And that scheme was carried out with a sluggishness which is inexplicable, except on the double hypothesis that the Russians, having made good the crossing of the Danube, were not yet in a condition to avail themselves swiftly of their advantage; and further, that they regarded speed as of comparatively little consequence, by reason of the belief that they had

succeeded by other than strictly military expedients in averting the risk of serious opposition. . . . Gourko is the only chief of the European campaign who proved himself capable of daring greatly. His crossing of the Balkans I venture to describe as a masterpiece of bold strategy, wherein the difficulties of the enterprise and the value of the object justified an audacity that superficially appears reckless. That Gourko, with barely a brigade of horsemen and a mere handful of riflemen, succeeded in getting so near Adrianople as Karabunar, is the strongest testimony at once to his soldierhood and to the comparative ease with which a Russian army might actually have reached Adrianople, if only moderate support had been accorded to the daring leader of the Guard cavalry. But how numbing was the paralysis affecting the general staff may be gathered from the fact that, although the head of the 8th Corps actually co-operated with Gourko in opening up the Shipka Pass, and although the whole corps was at the time within two days' march of the foot of the Balkans, not more than a single regiment of Mirski's Division ever descended the southern slope so far as the nearest villages of the Tunja valley. I know of nothing that hindered Radetzky from pushing on in support of Gourko, and backing the brilliant fortune the latter had opened up for the Russian arms. But

whence, it may be asked, would have come the supports for Radetzky, since one corps was scarcely strong enough to back up Gourko? Surely the army of the Czarewitch might have been fetched up out of that useless dead angle down there—that stalemate on the Rustchuk road—and set the task of keeping open the communications between the Danube and Tirnova. For the time, at least, Krudener might have held the line of the Osma, passively confronting Osman Pasha intrenching himself in Plevna. Then the 11th Corps, instead of being diverted to do palisade duty, would have been free to follow the 8th across the Balkans, and the 4th, which in the event turned aside to Plevna, would have been available to follow in support. But the Russian General Staff were incapable of rising to a sense of the wisdom of playing a bold game for a big stake. They assiduously lined a thoroughfare which, by reason of their lack of enterprise, led for them to nowhere. Gourko's expedition ceased to have a rationale when he was ordered to fall back, or rather, to put it bluntly, when the gallant cavalry man was abandoned to his fate. I have only to add with reference to Gourko's expedition, that it is perhaps more fertile in practical lessons to the student of the military art than any other section of the war in Europe."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Sufferings of the Inhabitants after the withdrawal of General Gourko from the South of the Balkans—Alarm of the Bulgarian and Turkish sections of the Population on the crossing of the Danube by the Russians—Charges of Cruelty against the Russians by the Turkish Government—Communication of Musurus Pasha to Lord Derby—Alleged Massacres of Mussulmans by Russians and Bulgarians—Memorandum transmitted to Earl Derby by Mr. Layard, at the request of the Turkish Grand Vizir—Extraordinary Allegations of Cruelty and Violation—Repudiation of the Charges by Count Schouvaloff on the part of the Russian Government—Russian Appeal to Foreign Military Agents and European Newspaper Correspondents—The Turkish Statements proved Untrustworthy—Report of Lieutenant-colonel Wellesley, British Attaché at the Russian Head-quarters—The request of the Russian Emperor—General denial of the Charges made by the Turks—Testimony of Mr. Archibald Forbes, correspondent of the *Daily News*—Treatment of the Turkish Families by the Russian Soldiery—Evidence of Sir Henry Havelock, M.P.—Character of the Russians—Turkish Mutilations and Forbearance of their Opponents—Russian Regulations concerning Prisoners of War—Weight of evidence against the Allegations of the Turks as to the Cruelty of the Russians North of the Balkans—Smouldering hate between Turk and Bulgarian South of the Balkans—Rising of the Bulgarians against their Turkish neighbours—Bulgarian Expedition against two Turkish Villages—Frightful Massacre of 286 male Turks—Captain Gambier's description of a Scene of Massacre at Offlandlik—Alleged Rapine and Murder by Bulgarians and Cossacks—Terror of the Christians at Kazanlik—Bulgarians armed by the Russians—Difficulties of the situation as described by a Correspondent of the *Temps*—Revolt in the Tunja Valley—Bulgarian Reprisals—Testimony of Suleiman Pasha, the Turkish Commander-in-chief—Estimate by Mr. Forbes of the treatment of the Bulgarians by the Turks—General Characteristics of the Bulgarian Population—Organization for Revolt—Prosperity of the Bulgarians—Turkish Reprisals—Mr. Forbes' opinion of the North-Balkan Bulgarians—Turkish and Christian neighbours—Turkish Houses wrecked by Bulgarians—Mr. Forbes on the Civil War between the Turks and Bulgarians—The conclusions of Mr. Forbes disputed by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. E. A. Freeman, and the Rev. Mr. MacColl—Opinion of Mr. MacGahan, another Correspondent of the *Daily News*—Important Testimony of Colonel Brackenbury, Correspondent of the *Times*—The opinion of Mr. Forbes generally Confirmed—"The Russian Soldier"—Further testimony to the Humane Treatment of the Turks by the Russians—Scenes in the Shipka Pass—Barbarism of the Turks—Alleged Fallacies in Mr. Forbes' reasoning—The importation of Circassians into Bulgaria—The relations of the Bulgarians with their Rulers—Mutual Burning and Slaughter—Feeling of the Russians towards the Bulgarians—The Bulgarian Legion and their Wrongs—The Massacre at Yeni Saghra—The bearing of the Bulgarian Population towards the Russians—Bulgarian Aspirations—Russian Policy—Mr. Forbes' testimony as to Turkish Mutilations—"A grim additional casualty of the Battle-field"—Representations by the European Governments on the violation of the Geneva Convention by the Turks—The Turks promise to have the provisions of the Convention respected—Discovery that in none of the Camps was there a Copy of the Convention in Turkish—Horrible barbarities at Telis—Considerate treatment of Hakki Pasha by the Grand-duke Nicholas—Circassians and Bashi-bazouks in the rear of General Gourko on his retreat to the Balkans—Captain Gambier's description of the Massacre at Yeni Saghra—The Turkish Irregulars—Murders prevented by Englishmen—Sack and Massacre at Kara-atli—Horrors of Genla-Mahalissé—Description by Colonel Lennox, Lieutenant Chermiside, and others—Dreadful scenes at Dalboka, as described by Mr. Rose, correspondent of the *Scotsman*—General summary by Captain Gambier—Description of the scenes from Shipka to Yeni Saghra—Testimony of Mr. Consul Fawcett—Despatch from Mr. Layard—No such war of Massacre and Desolation for Centuries—Russian "Allies"—Desertion of the Inhabitants of the valley of the Tunja and Maritza by the Russians—The Bulgarians misled by the appearance of General Gourko—The Energy of Despair—Massacre of Bulgarians at Yeni Saghra—Descriptions by Herr Wickède—Mutilation and massacre at Eski Saghra—Rage of the Bashi-bazouks—The "Valley of the Roses" a scene of bloodshed and murder—Number of Bulgarians slaughtered—Spirit of the Turkish Regular Soldiers—Lawlessness of the Irregulars—Testimony of English Officers—Strong, Protests of Mr. Layard—Excuse of the Grand Vizir—Conversation between Mr. Layard and Mehemet Ali—Massacre at Lisakeui—Further Massacre at Karlova—Description of the scenes by a correspondent of the *Times*—Heartrending condition of the Bulgarian Inhabitants—Slaughter in the district of Schirpan—Executions by a Council of War—The Death Ticket—Famine in the Valley of the Jantra—Frightful distress and terrible sufferings of the Inhabitants—British Charity—Relief Societies and the manner of their operations—Testimony of Captain Gambier—Death of women and children from gunshot and sabre wounds, thirst, and starvation—Efforts of the British Consul and others at Adrianople—Shelter provided by the Greek Patriarch—Vast number of the Fugitives—Strain on the resources of Adrianople—Military Hospitals—The Red Crescent Society—The Stafford House Committee—British National Aid Society—Ladies' Committees.

THE crossing of the Balkans by the Russians, and the subsequent defeat and withdrawal of General Gourko, were the indirect means of bringing about untold suffering to the inhabitants of the surrounding country. The area between the Lower Balkans and the Philippopolis railway once more became the scene of fearful horrors, and the incidents connected with this episode are

among the most terrible of the whole war. From the nature of these events, it is somewhat difficult to present to the reader an adequate description of the frightful scenes which took place; and as we are specially anxious that our record shall be both truthful and absolutely impartial, we shall avoid hearsay evidence as much as possible, and confine ourselves almost exclusively to such matters as

were attested by responsible and impartial European witnesses, or were contained in published official documents.

When the Russian forces, having crossed the Danube, first appeared in Bulgaria, great alarm was felt both by the Bulgarian and Turkish sections of the population—the Turks fearing a rising on the part of the Bulgarians, and the Bulgarians being alarmed lest the retreating Turks should ill-treat the unarmed Christian population. These fears, however, were not at this period realized—at least, not to any extent. The retreating Turks contented themselves with drawing off as many of the cattle of their neighbours as they could secure; and the Bulgarians, on the other hand, although guilty of pillaging the deserted houses of the Turkish quarters, refrained from acts of cruelty or violence. Some of the scenes of robbery and destruction wrought by the Bulgarians at Hirchova and Sistova have been described in previous chapters, and isolated cases of violence may likewise have occurred; but it is certain that while the Russians remained north of the Balkans there was no great outbreak of ferocity or massacre.

The Turkish Government, it is true, from the first entry of the Russians, commenced publishing a series of reports, laying heavy charges of cruelty against the Russian troops—in some instances professing even to give exact details of the number of unarmed Mahometans killed and mutilated. Thus in a communication made by the Turkish ambassador in London, Musurus Pasha, to the Earl of Derby, on the 25th of July, 1877, and published in the official Blue Book on Turkey, No. 24, the following statistics were given. The Turkish ambassador said:—

“We have ascertained as exactly as possible the number of dwellings burnt and of Mussulmans massacred by the Russians and Bulgarians in the villages which have up to the present suffered most from the invasion of the enemy, and I herewith transmit to you the result:—At Batak, an exclusively Mussulman village of the district of Sistova—houses, 100; men, 200; women, 300. Seven of the victims are said to have survived. At Balovan, a Mussulman village of the district of Tirnova—houses, 250; men, 700; women, 1200. One person only is believed to have escaped the massacre. At Carabounas—houses, 100; men, 200; women,

300. Two persons escaped death. At Kestanbol—houses, 150; men, 300; women, 600. Three survivors. At Chems, a mixed village—Mussulman houses, 60; men, 120; women, 200. One person alone escaped. At Tundja, a mixed village—houses, 100; men, 250; women, 400. There were three survivors. The following is the number of houses burnt in the villages which were deserted by their inhabitants before the arrival of the enemy:—Tranich Homri, 40; Beran, 150; Odalar, 180; Amoudlounk, 80; Pourouch, 100; Kodjina, 70; Okdijler, 200; total houses burnt, 820. It is further reported that the Mussulman inhabitants of forty or fifty mixed villages, each containing at least 100 houses, tendered their submission to the Russians, but their fate is unknown. You will agree with us that these frightful statistics form the most overwhelming evidence of the pitiless cruelty of Russian policy.”

The following memorandum was also transmitted to Lord Derby by Mr. Layard, the British ambassador at Constantinople, at the request of Mahmoud Damad, the Turkish Grand Vizir:—

“To-day his Highness Mahmoud Damad Pasha, during an interview with Sir Collingwood Dickson, made the following communication to him, which he requested might be conveyed to her Britannic Majesty's ambassador:—

“‘The present war does not resemble those that have previously occurred between Turkey and Russia, or the wars between other civilized countries.

“‘Russia's intentions are very evident: she has declared war against the Turks with the professed intention of redressing the wrongs of the Bulgarian Christians; but her real one is to complete the destruction of Islamism, although she announced to Europe that her desire was to procure a better form of government for the Christians under the rule of the Sultan, and to ameliorate their condition.

“‘The aim of the enemy is to deprive Turkey of her provinces in Roumelia, and to attain it she thinks it right to commit every kind of atrocity towards the unhappy Mussulman inhabitants who do not fly in time on the approach of the Russian soldiers. The Russians, since entering Bulgaria with their armies, have shown what their own Christianity is worth by setting at nought the usages of civilized warfare in bombarding and

destroying Rustchuk and other towns ; and above all, by inciting the Bulgarian Christians to commit unheard-of cruelties upon their Mussulman fellow-countrymen, and by perpetrating these deeds themselves. In every place occupied by Russian troops murder and rapine have been of constant occurrence ; and only this morning information was received of the massacre of 200 Moslem men, women, and children, who, in arabas, were escaping to Varna from the neighbourhood of Sistova and Rustchuk. These fugitives were overtaken by some Russian cavalry, who murdered the men and children, violated the women, and then killed them by ripping them open. Many other instances of such horrors were known, but the particular one above mentioned came to the notice of Government this morning. We leave Europe to judge these iniquitous and barbarous proceedings of a Government which pretends to come for the regeneration of the Christian population.

“ ‘ I consider it my duty to draw the attention of his Excellency the ambassador to the fact, that the Russians massacre, without pity, all Mussulmans who fall into their hands—men, women, and children, the aged and infirm ; none have been spared in this horrible butchery, so disgraceful to the age in which we live.

“ ‘ The Government has felt it necessary to detach from the army of the Danube several battalions of regular troops to keep the Mussulman population in check, and prevent them from avenging the blood of their co-religionists. But soon, despite all the good-will of Government, it will find itself utterly helpless to repress the rage and indignation of the Mussulmans.

“ ‘ Already, on the other side of the Balkans, great excitement has arisen amongst the Mussulmans, who desire to make reprisals. Can we contemplate with indifference the tortures and horrible cruelties of which the Mussulmans are the victims, by preventing our people from avenging the blood of their brethren ? This appears to me most difficult ; and the consequence of all these terrible facts will be a general massacre, which we think it our duty to put before all Europe, and to decline all responsibility for what may occur hereafter.’

“ THERAPIA, *July 14, 1877.*”

Many other reports were made of a similar character to those above quoted, and some of them

further charged the Russians with acting with terrible barbarity. These reports were likewise transmitted to the British Government by the English ambassador at Constantinople, and published in the official blue books.

The attention of the Russian Government was thus called to these accusations, and Count Schouvaloff, the Russian ambassador in London, on July 30, communicated the following memorandum to Lord Derby :—

“ Official despatches from Constantinople bring before the notice of the public pretended atrocities committed by the Russian troops in Europe and in Asia, which are supposed to have been reported by the Ottoman authorities. Besides giving the most categorical denial to these false allegations, by which our enemy seeks to avenge himself for the loss of important positions, we think it right to point out a striking inaccuracy in the accusations of the Sublime Porte. The local authorities could not report acts committed by the Russian troops in Europe, because on the approach of the latter every trace of Ottoman officials had disappeared, as well as almost every Mussulman inhabitant. To begin with Sistova, we found on all sides the Turkish quarters and villages abandoned by the inhabitants, who carried off with them their cattle and as much of their property as they could, besides also taking the waggons and beasts of burden belonging to their Christian neighbours. These latter did not fail in several places to take advantage of the first moments of their deliverance to indemnify themselves for the annoyance they had so long endured, by pillaging the houses which the Mussulmans had abandoned. As to the assassinations or cruelties inflicted upon peaceful inhabitants, especially with the refinements of which the practised imagination of the Turks is alone capable, the report is one of the unworthy calumnies with which, since the massacres of the spring of last year, the organs of the Porte have vainly endeavoured to charge others, a calumny against which all the impartial witnesses of the march of the Imperial Russian army will doubtless raise their voice. Besides, several foreign military agents and correspondents of European newspapers are there, with the actual advance-guards of the Russian columns, so that they can testify the truth to those who from the boldness of the Ottoman calumny are dis-

trustful of the simple denial of the Russian Imperial authority."

The appeal of the Russian Government to the correspondents of the European newspapers with the Russian army was promptly replied to; and it soon became manifest that most of the statements made at this period by the Turkish officials, and published by the Turkish Government, were not only untrustworthy, but were in too many instances deliberate inventions. In proof of this may be cited a very curious article entitled—"A Conspiracy against the Truth," in which a correspondent of the *Times* with the Turkish army pointed out the enormous amount of energy the Turks had expended in vain efforts to deceive Europe. They actually transformed their officials into fabricators of false news, as the following passage from the article in question will clearly show. The correspondent of the *Times* had gone from Shumla to Trestenik, where he expected to find the army of Eyoub Pasha. After describing the conditions under which correspondents were placed, the writer says—

"By hard riding we reached the army in two days, having, by detours to avoid Cossacks, done over 100 miles in the time. Instead of great battles, we were just in time to join in a great retreat. To resume my story, I had just returned from the front for the purpose of sending off full accounts of the journey (which could only be done through the political agents at Shumla). I had sent telegrams there to my agent. Tired, with nearly seven days in the saddle under a blistering sun, when I arrived the first information I got was that the gentleman I had (by permission of the agents) left to act for me and forward any telegrams I should be able to send him, had been arrested and sent away under escort the day I left. That this was part of the common plot I think nobody will doubt when I relate the facts. The gentleman who kindly consented to act for me was a highly educated young Englishman of well-known family, who came out a strong philo-Turk, desiring to enter the army here and fight for what he considered a righteous cause. Not being able to obtain a commission, and desiring some occupation, he accepted the honorary position of my deputy at Shumla, while I went to the front. The arrangement was one suggested to me by Tevfik Bey, but who appeared throughout as personally one of my warmest friends, giving me invitations

to dinner and accepting my invitations in return. It is true, when the Bey told me he would recognize anybody I appointed, he was, I believe, under the impression that I should name a gentleman in whom he expressed unbounded confidence, which, for reasons of my own, I never intended to do. Now, no sooner was my back turned than my deputy, who, among his other accomplishments, draws very well, made a sketch in the streets of Shumla; and, being followed by police agents evidently awaiting him, was arrested. Strong in his innocence, he demanded to be taken to my friend Tevfik Bey. The Bey treated the matter with an unexpected gravity; but said from respect to me, and in order not to cause inconvenience to the *Times*, he would give the prisoner a letter to the Governor which would put the matter straight. I have not been able to get a copy of that letter, but I happen to know the pith of its contents. It was in Turkish, and said, in effect, 'Send the bearer away to Constantinople under escort this night.' Thunder-struck, my friend declared there must be some mistake, and endeavoured to see his newly-found patron again, but to no purpose. To Constantinople he went by a Turkish man-of-war from Varna, being kept in close confinement in a filthy barrack at the latter place all day and night till the ship was ready. At Shumla-road station my friend gave a letter to the guard who had escorted him so far to give to Tevfik Bey to give to me upon my return. It was an explanatory letter, and contained a request that I would take care of and send after him certain effects left at my house in Shumla. That letter was never given to me. But now for the motives. For a day or two before I left for the front—at the Bey's suggestion—there had been a very brisk business doing in Cossack atrocities. Humane man that he is, Tevfik's soul was moved at the inhuman doings of the Muscovs, and both he and his other self, Selim Effendi, were indignantly anxious that the English public should immediately have full details of all the butcheries and other foul doings which the different commanders, who were too busy to tell him anything about the fighting, found time to telegraph in harrowing fulness. I was informed that both gentlemen were grieved that I did not avail myself of their permission to telegraph these sad facts; but for reasons which even now appear to me sufficient I politely but firmly refused to do so. More than

that, my last words on leaving to my deputy were, 'Remember no Cossack atrocities unless you see and talk with the victims.' This was well known in Shumla, some of my colleagues having commented upon my scepticism in the matter. Now, will it be credited that, my back being turned, and my educated substitute being forcibly got out of the way, the telegram which I inclose was given to the elderly gentleman who had been so strongly approved by the Bey, with injunctions to attach my name to it and send it off to you immediately. They put their official seal on it, as you will see, and the good-natured old soul ran towards the telegraph office for fear it would be late. On the way, however, he felt a little nervous about forging my name, and called in upon a friend of mine to ask if he thought I should like it. The result of the interview was that he, to please the authorities, pretended to send it; and to please me did not, and here it is:—

"To 'AUDITOR' TIMES, LONDON.

"Bulgars in Balkans risen and murdered Jatva and Dobnitcha population. At Tchaily, near Rasgrad, 200 refugees from Sistova, Musslemen, murdered by Russians and Bulgarians. At Ostrancha and Costova all Musslemen killed, including women and children, refugees from Armoutton, all massacred. In town itself 11 women and ten children. Whole population of Utch Destin massacred by Bulgars. Russians took whole population of Bechpinar prisoners, violating the women.

"CANINGSBY."

"When I wished to telegraph to you the fact that my deputy had been arrested and my telegrams from the front had not reached you, the political agents blankly refused to allow me to communicate by telegraph at all; I might write. I did write a long letter—sixteen closely-worded pages, equal to two columns and a half; handed it in open, according to regulations, to be 'glanced at.' The same evening I received the following letter from Mr. Prior, special artist of the *Illustrated London News*:—

"SHUMLA, July 17, 1877.

"DEAR MR. ———,—I have not the slightest objection to give you in writing the information that I saw ——— this evening reading and striking out passages from your letter to *The Times* at the

house of Tevfik Bey. If you open that letter, which is now sealed with Tevfik Bey's seal, you will find that very long passages have been struck out. As I tell you, I was asked 'to be discreet,' and consider that I am so in being loyal to you, as we have travelled together.

"I am, dear Mr. ———, yours faithfully,
"MELTON PRIOR."

"Upon opening my letter upon its return to me officially sealed for the post, I found more than a fifth abstracted, cut away, and what was left had such extensive and thorough erasures that you would have thought I had taken leave of my wits to have sent you such an epistle. Every impartial criticism—in fact, everything which gave the letter any value—was so effectually inked out that it was impossible to read a word.

"Next I was credibly informed that my name had been attached to a sort of 'round robin' or memorial to the world at large on the subject of the atrocities by Cossacks and Bulgarians, of which I had never even heard, the authorities well knowing that I was very dubious about such atrocities altogether, although I regret to say that since then I have had good evidence that some women and children have been wounded with lance thrusts; but the victims who have come under my immediate notice admitted, under very sharp cross-examination, that the hurts were all got during the fight. I hear of other cases at Rasgrad and elsewhere, but cannot speak for any but those at Shumla."

In addition to this testimony, the Russian Emperor requested the British military attaché at the Imperial Head-quarters, Lieutenant-colonel Wellesley, to report upon the subject to the British Government. This report, dated August 6, 1877, and published in the official Blue Book, was addressed to Earl Derby, and was couched in the following terms:—

"My Lord,—On my arrival from Bulgaria I had the honour to report verbally to your Lordship the effect created at the Russian Imperial Head-quarters, as also generally in the Russian army, by the repeated appearance in the English press of apparently well-authenticated cases of cruelty on the part of the Russian troops. These accusations, said by the Russian authorities to be virtually without foundation, made so deep an impression in Russia, and especially in the Russian army,

that it was considered advisable that I should proceed to England, with the object of submitting to her Majesty's Government all the facts which, owing to my having been attached to the Imperial Head-quarters, and owing also to my having visited many Bulgarian villages, have come to my immediate knowledge. Your Lordship is aware that, although attached to the Emperor of Russia's staff in Bulgaria, I have not been at the front, nor have I visited personally the villages in which the alleged cruelties are supposed to have been perpetrated; but I have nevertheless seen many trustworthy persons, both Russian and English, who have been present at the various engagements of the war, and who, without exception, deny having witnessed a single case of massacre or cruelty on the part of the Russian soldiers. During my stay at the Imperial Head-quarters I was daily in communication with persons going to and returning from the front; and when the newspapers commenced to draw the attention of the public to alleged Russian atrocities, I made it my especial business to inquire into the matter, so as to be able to communicate to your Lordship the real facts of the case. The result of the inquiries I made, not only, as I said before, of Russians, but also of Englishmen, have led me to the firm and honest conviction that the statements of Russian cruelties are entirely without foundation. It is of course possible that such cases may have occurred without their having come to the knowledge of myself or of those from whom I obtained my information; but it is scarcely possible that wholesale massacres could have been perpetrated by the Russian troops without the facts having reached the ears of the many correspondents of English newspapers who have watched the military operations from the commencement of the war, without being in any way restricted as to their movements. I had many opportunities of questioning these gentlemen, some of whom represented papers decidedly hostile to the policy of Russia; but they one and all emphatically denied having witnessed any such acts as those of which the Russian soldiers have been accused. On the other hand, they have testified to many acts of kindness on the part of the Russians towards Turkish prisoners, with whom they even frequently shared their rations. The reports of English correspondents from Shumla respecting the wounding of many

women and children by the Russians are accounted for at the Imperial Head-quarters in the following manner:—A short time since some Russian cavalry came across what was considered to be a Turkish convoy leaving Rustchuk, and summoned it to surrender. The Turks replied by firing on the cavalry, which led to a *melée*, in which women and children may easily have been either killed or wounded, for the supposed convoy turned out to be a caravan of Turkish peasants leaving Rustchuk with their household goods. Orders were given by the Emperor to have this matter thoroughly investigated, but the report had not been received when I quitted head-quarters. It is my duty to add that, although I utterly disbelieve in the alleged Russian atrocities, I feel sure that the present is a war in which little quarter is given or expected on either side. Cases of plundering by the Russian troops have come to my knowledge, but not to any great extent. I have also heard of many cases of incendiarism and plunder on the part of Bulgarians, but I believe that every effort is made by the Russian authorities to check these barbarous and revengeful people; and I have known cases where Turkish peasants have actually applied for a Cossack guard to protect them from Bulgarian attack. In conclusion, I will only add that my long experience of Russian soldiers has taught me to look upon them as good-natured and kind-hearted, and quite incapable of such wanton acts of cruelty as those which are attributed to them.—I have, &c.,

(Signed) "FRED. WELLESLEY."

The testimony of Mr. Archibald Forbes, the brilliant and enterprising correspondent of the *Daily News* with the Russian army, may be quoted to the same effect. In a remarkable article published in the *Nineteenth Century* for November, 1877, entitled "Russians, Turks, and Bulgarians," Mr. Forbes deals with various phases of the war; and it is worthy of note that Mr. Gladstone, who subsequently made Mr. Forbes' article the basis of a lecture in which he "drew a distinction between what Mr. Forbes observed as a witness, and what he gave merely as his opinion," paid a high tribute to the intrepid courage and high ability of this correspondent, and observed that Mr. Forbes had "surpassed every other writer in the brilliancy and in the fidelity of his military

descriptions, as well as the plainness of speech with which he had described the evils of those among whom he had been living." Referring to the atrocities which had been imputed to the Russians, Mr. Forbes says:—

"Of the multitudinous atrocities on Turkish refugees charged against the Russian soldiery with so great persistent circumstantiality by Turkish authorities and their abettors, I have never found the smallest tittle of evidence, and on soul and conscience believe the allegations thereof to be utterly false. But as I must not speak of mere belief, it behoves me to say that of all events which occurred south of the Balkans I have merely hearsay knowledge. 'Atrocities' in plenty were, however, charged against the Russians north of the Balkans, and respecting these I can speak from a wide range of personal experience. The Turks resident in the towns and villages of Bulgaria were peremptorily enjoined by commands from Constantinople to quit their homes and retire before the advancing Russians. In the great majority of cases they did so, and their evacuation was accomplished before the first Russian reached the vicinage of their abodes. This was so at Sistova and Batak, and at many other places where murder and rapine were circumstantially and lyingly averred against the Russian soldiers. The Turks who anywhere chose to remain were unmolested without exception, so far as I know. The orders that they should be so were strictly inculcated on the Russian *éclaireurs*; the Bulgarians were made acquainted with the injunctions of the Emperor by the Imperial proclamation widely, although surreptitiously, circulated in Bulgaria before the Danube was crossed. To this day you may see the cadi of Sistova walking about the town with an air as if he owned it. Gorni Lubnica is a large village, not two hours' ride south of the Imperial and Grand-ducal Head-quarters in Gorni Studeni. Nearly half its population were Turks, more agricultural than most of their fellows, and of these a considerable number chose to remain in their dwellings and take their chance of the Russians. They were unmolested by the Bulgarian inhabitants and equally by the Russians. They dwell contentedly in their cottages, they have reaped their harvests and thrashed out their grain; you may see them fearlessly sauntering about their lanes, turban on head, none making them afraid. About Poradim, on the Plevna

front of the Russians, many Turks remained in their dwellings; they met with no molestation, and are now earning a livelihood by carting to the front projectiles to be hurled against their brethren. It happened that by an accident I entered the town of Biela in advance of the Russian cavalry, and while there still remained on its outskirts some Turkish irregulars. These went; nearly the whole of the civilian Turks had already departed, but there remained behind a few, some living openly, some seeking concealment. In the evening the Russian cavalry came in. The Turks who had chosen to stay openly at home were simply visited by an officer and bidden to stay where they were; those in concealment were searched for by the Russian soldiers, aided in their investigation by the Bulgarians; when discovered, kept under guard all night till the General had seen them, and then liberated to return to their homes and avocations. The pillage of the subsequent night by Russian infantry stragglers was the only instance of serious indiscipline of which I am cognizant; and it was no pillage of Turks, but a rough miscellaneous sack of property, Bulgarian as well as Turkish, in which no personal injury was inflicted. A number of Biela Turks, who, with their families, had sought refuge in the woods around, and were suffering much from hardship and exposure, were visited and invited to return by order of the Emperor. They reoccupied their habitations, reaped their harvests, and I have seen them walking about the place among the Russians and Bulgarians with the utmost independence of bearing. When the Turkish soldiers in a panic evacuated Tirnova, there remained behind some sixty Turkish families. The Russian force was a flying detachment, chiefly of Cossacks. Tirnova swarmed with Bulgarians professing bitter hostility to the Turks, fraternizing warmly in copious raki with the Cossacks. Now, if ever, was the train kindled for insult and injury to the Turks at the hands of the Russians, under the temptations of instigation and drink. But by the Russians not a hair of their heads was injured, not a scrap of their property touched. As soon as might be, the officer in command detailed a guard to protect from marauding Bulgarians the section of the Turkish quarter where the population remained, and that guard was maintained till the Russians instituted at Tirnova a civic government. Constantly accompanying

Cossacks and other Russian cavalry in reconnaissances on the front of the Rustchuk army, I never noticed even any disposition to be cruel. When Turks were found they were made prisoners in virtue of the obvious necessities of warfare; when complained of, the accusations were judicially examined and justice done deliberately according to martial law. I do not aver, remember, that atrocities were not committed on fugitive Turks; but not by the Russians. While the Turks yet remained in their entirety in the mixed villages the Bulgarians did not dare to meddle with them. Nor would they venture to interfere with remnants remaining behind from the general exodus; because they knew the terms of the Emperor's proclamation, and were afraid to be thus actively vindictive. But reprisals were not to be apprehended from Turks 'on the run,' encumbered with wives, children, and household substance; there was little danger that any brutality perpetrated on these forlorn fugitives should reach the ears of the Russians; and the Bulgarians, in places, it is questionless hardened their hearts, and fell on with bitter curish venom. But north of the Balkans, at least, Cossack lances and Russian sabres wrought no barbarity on defenceless men, women, and children. The Russian of my experience is instinctively a humane man, with a strong innate sense of the manliness of fair play. The Turkish prisoners I have ever seen well and even considerately treated."

Sir Henry Havelock, M.P., who acted as military correspondent of the *Times* after Lieutenant-colonel Brackenbury had been obliged to return home on account of illness, and who had special opportunities of observation for several months, furnishes very similar evidence to that of Mr. Forbes. In an address to his constituents at Sunderland on 20th December, 1877, he said—

"He would now make a few remarks about the character of the various races with whom he had had to do within the last few months; and here it behoved him to speak with due caution, because he had been in the position of a guest with the Russians. But he had always borne in mind the saying about the friend of to-day perchance becoming the enemy of to-morrow, and *vice versa*. That was the thorough English way in which he had looked on everything connected with the Russian army; and he must say that if the Russians were pleased with the descriptions he had

given of them, they must have a liking for some of the most plain-spoken and severe criticism that was ever passed upon them. The Russians had been represented, for the most part, as barbarians, who were fond of grease and train oil; and the Russian soldier, it had been said, was treated with kicks and blows, like a slave who could not call his soul his own. His impression, however, was quite different from all that. He had found the Russian soldier docile, tractable, and almost sheepish in his gentleness; and, so far from being drunken or brutal, he had only seen three drunken men during his sojourn among thousands of them. In their dealings, also, with the Bulgarians—not in all respects an amiable people—he remarked that they showed the greatest gentleness and abstinence from excesses; and in distant villages and roadsides, where the soldiers were in small parties and under no control, their conduct was most admirable. If they looked back to some of the newspapers of the previous May and June, they would see the accounts of the most horrible atrocities committed by the Cossacks on the Bulgarians, not only on the south, but on the north of the Balkans. Now, he had been associated with those men for three months, and a tamer people he had never met with. He did not believe it was possible for anybody to produce one authenticated instance of violence, even in a minor degree, committed by any of the Russian officers or soldiers during their occupation of those provinces. On the other hand, the Turks had never attempted to restrain the barbarism of their irregular troops, and atrocities had been perpetrated, not only by the Turkish irregular, but also by the Turkish regular forces. A remarkable instance of this was seen when General Gourko entered the Shipka Pass; on one side there was a heap of mangled Russian corpses, evidently the bodies of men who had been wounded and afterwards killed and mutilated in the most revolting manner; while, on the other side, in view of all that, a body of Russian troops were withheld by their own good feeling and by the example of their officers from any retaliatory excesses, and were engaged also in attending to the wants of the poor wounded Turks whom they found there."

In proof, also, that the Russian authorities desired to carry on the war according to the principles of modern civilization, it may be mentioned that soon after the Declaration of War a Com-

mission was appointed at the Russian Ministry of War at St. Petersburg to revise the regulations concerning prisoners of war. The following were the principal points of the system agreed on, which, it will be seen, was conceived in a most humane spirit:—

“The transport of prisoners to the towns marked out as the places for their detention will be conducted by railway, under military escort. The chief of the detachment will receive, on his departure, his instructions for the route, and money to meet the necessary expenses of the journey. As soon as the train has left, the officer who has forwarded the prisoners will send a despatch to the Governor of the province for which they are destined. This despatch must state the number of prisoners sent, and the time at which they are expected to arrive. Pashas will be carried first class, superior officers second, and subalterns third, but separated as much as possible from soldiers. In every case in which it can be arranged, a person speaking Turkish will be added to the escort. In localities not served by railways, prisoners will be forwarded by stages to their place of detention; subalterns will follow the detachment in carts, and superior officers will be carried separately, each with a guard. Prisoners falling ill on the way will be handed over to the local military or civil authority. If subjects of Foreign States accompanying the Turkish armies are made prisoners, notice of the fact must be given by the governors to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs directly they arrive in the province.”

Very different, however, was to be the position of Russian subjects who took part in a war against their Emperor and country. They were to be treated as traitors, and not as prisoners of war; and were to be conveyed with irons on their ankles, and to be sent immediately before a court-martial.

The prisoners were to be distributed, as nearly as possible, in groups of fifty. Each group was to choose from among themselves a representative, to whom would be handed the money for their maintenance, as well as that which they would gain by labour. Money or other articles of value which prisoners did not wish to keep with them, might be given into the charge of the local treasurers, and would only be given up on the production of a receipt signed by the owner or his legal representative.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the

weight of evidence is against the allegations of the Turks as to the cruelty of the Russians after crossing the Danube, and on their advance to the Balkans. Up to this point it may be fairly held that the charges made by the Turkish Government against the Russian regular troops cannot be sustained. When, however, the crossing of the Balkans was effected by the Russians, the smouldering hate between Turk and Bulgarian broke into flame. The reader will remember that the part of the country into which the Russians had entered was very near the scenes of those massacres of Bulgarians which took place in the previous year, which had exercised so great an influence upon the public feeling of Europe, and had so materially shaped the policy of England.

Believing that the small Russian force which appeared was but the advanced guard of an enormous army, that would put an end to Turkish rule for ever, the Bulgarians rose against their Turkish neighbours; while, on the other hand, the retreating Turkish troops and Bashi-bazouks attacked and plundered the Bulgarian part of the population. Whenever the Russians appeared the Turks fled from their homes and villages, which were immediately pillaged and burnt by the Bulgarians—darker crimes of cruelty and murder being frequently added. Many horrible charges of this nature had been previously made by the Turks against the Bulgarians; but, as we have seen, without proof. That there was grave foundation for these charges at the period under review is, however, too certain; and perhaps the following narrative will best serve to display the feelings entertained by the Bulgarian part of the population towards their Turkish neighbours, and their conduct when opportunity offered. The account was given by a Bulgarian to Mr. Rose, the correspondent of the *Scotsman* who accompanied General Gourko. The writer says:—

“By accident I heard of an expedition, deliberately planned and carried into execution, for the extermination of all the Turkish men in two villages in the Balkans. The coolness and set purpose with which the wholesale murder was gone about is its most frightful feature; its redeeming points, if I may be pardoned for using the expression regarding such atrocious work, were that the lives and honour of all females, young and old, were unassailed—indeed, the Bul-

garians prided themselves on the fact that 'they made no war on women.' The curious thing about the whole affair was, that the participants in the expedition deluded themselves into the belief that what they were doing was warlike, and justified by the usages of war—certainly of such war as is now waged by the Turks. My informant was a participant in the events to be related, and I shall give as nearly as possible a literal translation of his narrative:—'About 300 of us,' he said, 'determined to make an expedition against two Turkish villages. We collected in Kabrova, some from that town, and some from neighbouring villages, all armed with guns and yataghans. Two villages, named Adamova and Malkova, were selected, and that chiefly because the Turks there had in former times distinguished themselves in the cruelties which they perpetrated against the Bulgarians in their neighbourhood. We left Kabrova on Sunday, and on Monday night we got to Adamova, and surrounded the village when the Turks were asleep. We knocked at the doors of the houses, and told the Turks that all the men must come outside. When they had done this, we said to them they must come away and work for the Russians in making the new road across the Balkans at the Shipka Pass. They believed us, and every one took with him a small bag containing provisions for two or three days. In all, 223 Turks came with us from Adamova. We led the way to a place two miles from the village, where we stopped and said to the Turks—'Now it is night. Perhaps you will run away from us, and therefore we must tie you up to prevent you going away.' Resistance was useless, and they allowed themselves to have their hands and legs tied, but so as to enable them to walk. Then our chief divided the Bulgarians into two companies. One of the companies took half of the Turks—allowing the other half to remain with the second company. When that was done the first company brought their Turks 600 yards to a mountain, where the Turks were again divided into parties of ten men. With each party of ten, five Bulgarians and a captain were sent forward to a lonely place, and there the Bulgarians shot them with their guns. When the Turks were not killed outright, we took our yataghans and put them out of pain by cutting off their heads. One of the parties of Turks when they heard the shots divined what was being done,

and they tried very hard to escape. Five Turks managed to break the ropes with which they were tied, and ran away. The Bulgarian guard fired at them and killed two; two more were wounded and caught in the woods after a chase of more than an hour, and despatched; but one escaped altogether. When the first company had shot all their Turks, the second company marched their prisoners up to the mountain, and killed them all there. We then marched to the village of Malkova, and there in the same way killed other 63 Turks—in all, 286. We dug a large grave in both places, and buried the dead bodies all in a heap.'"

This massacre is said to have taken place in the beginning of August, and its incidents show unmistakably the feeling that prevailed among the native Bulgarians; nor was the boast that the Bulgarians made no war on women always justified, as shameful indignities were inflicted on the Jewish women of Eski Saghra, and Turkish women in other places.

The truthfulness of the above narrative is rendered probable by the actual observation of similar scenes by trustworthy witnesses. Captain James Gambier, R.N., who acted as correspondent for the *Times* and supplied several sketches to the *Illustrated London News*, and who accompanied the Turkish army under the command of Suleiman Pasha, in some admirable letters which were published in the *Times* as from a "Naval Correspondent," speaks of what he saw concerning these incidents. In a letter dated August 16 he says—

"Yesterday we were invited by Suleiman Pasha to go and see a village that had within the last week been the scene of a frightful massacre by the Bulgarians, aided, it is said, by Cossacks; but of this, though I believe it myself, I cannot vouch for the truth. . . . The scene of this last massacre is a village called Offlandlik, or Ufflana, about half way between this and Kazanlik, and consequently very near to the Russian lines at the latter place. It was a most flourishing village or town, and probably contained upwards of 3500 inhabitants; many of them, judging from the few houses that remain standing, being very well to do. It appears that through all the time of the Russian occupation of the Hain these people were left unmolested, which must in fairness be borne in mind; and the dates of these affairs have

in almost every instance gone to prove that the actual presence of the Russian army proper has acted as a temporary shield for the unhappy Mahometan population from the revenge of the Bulgarians. Offlandlik is no exception to this rule, as far as I can ascertain by the most careful investigation. From the 14th of July to the 8th or 9th of August the Russian army, or detachments of it, were within a few miles of the seven or eight villages of the Valley of the Tunja, which have since been destroyed and the people massacred. During that time, so far as I can learn, the massacres which were perpetrated by Bulgarians were in places where it is now certain the regular Russian army never appeared. At Offlandlik I have the most positive evidence that this was the case, for the bodies of the dead were plainly victims of only a few days, from four to six at the outside; and I can most positively assert that the death of one young woman could only have occurred two or three days ago at the furthest.

. We also found the remains of women and children in a well. How many there were it was difficult to say, as we did not get them up. But they must have been numerous, and I am inclined to believe the story of a poor trembling old woman who accompanied us to the spot, that there were twelve or fifteen women in the well. The story of all the people who escaped, and who have repeated it at different times, is that the Bulgarians, with a few Cossacks—some say two Cossack officers—came to the village some ten or twelve days ago, after the retreat of the regular army. They appear to have collected all the young women and children in one or two large houses, to have taken all the men outside the village and shot them, and to have continued pillaging and burning, and occasionally killing anybody they found. All accounts agree that the unhappy girls and young women, who were kept prisoners in these houses, were daily and hourly ravished, and fifteen of them were killed; and that a very large number of them were taken away to the mountains, when the Bulgarians retreated on the advance of Suleiman Pasha's army.

"We had no time to make any further searches; we were a long distance from the camp, half way between the two armies, with night coming on, and the plain full of marauding Bashi-bazouks and Circassians, who would any of them murder

their best friend for five francs. On our way home we came across upwards of 120 dead Turks, who had all been massacred by bayonet or sword, or shot suddenly. They were lying in groups, in one place forty, another fifty, and two or three smaller parties. Among these was one woman. That these men were slaughtered in cold blood there can be no reason to doubt. There were several very old men among them. But how, or by whom, and whether it was by Cossacks or Bulgarians, these men were killed there was no evidence; and beyond the mere fact that they are lying there dead, and were Turks, everything is mere conjecture."

For three days prior to the arrival of the Russians, the Christians of Kazanlik (numbering from 8000 to 12,000) had lived in the utmost terror, burying their valuables and huddling themselves thirty or forty together into a house, to pass the night. The Turks had threatened them with fire and sword in case of defection, and the wretched beings had no other news than that of the public crier, who announced every day, by order of the Caimakan, that the Russians had been completely beaten at Tirnova; and they must not be surprised if some small detachments cut off from the main body, and completely astray, had penetrated into the mountains, in search of the way back to their country.

In spite of this Oriental gasconading, the flight of the remnant of the Turkish troops from Kazanlik, on the approach of the Russians, was so precipitate, that an ambulance containing fifty wounded, amongst whom were five officers, was abandoned. As soon as the Turkish troops had left, the Mussulman population was immediately deprived of its arms, which were distributed amongst the Bulgarians, with instructions to guard the town and give chase to the stragglers and Bashi-bazouks. These poor people, quite proud of this honour—the privilege of free men—marched about with a regular arsenal of weapons upon them. Men might be seen promenading the streets with three poniards and four or five pistols in their girdles.

"I do not think," said a correspondent of the *Temps* who accompanied General Gourko's force, "that there are many places as attractive as this little town. The Valley of Roses is the literal and at the same time poetical name of the plain extending between the two Balkans from Hainkoi to Kalofer, and of which Kazanlik occupies the centre. Here,

to the ordinary objects of cultivation, cereals, fruit-trees, &c., the peasant adds the plantation, on a large scale, of the shrub whose flowers furnish the essence so renowned throughout the East."

Alas! the purple of blood was to cover that of the roses in this beautiful valley. The same correspondent thus explains the inextricable situation in which the Russian authorities found themselves beyond the Balkans:—

"The Turkish population, with the exception of some individuals too compromised in the events of the previous year, had not quitted Kazanlik; it had been occupied too promptly, and then it was, of course, necessary that the exodus should cease. From Sistova the Mussulmans were rolled back upon Tirnova; then, gathering like a snowball, the population of the latter town retreated upon Kazanlik and Philippopolis. Kazanlik is occupied, and Philippopolis no doubt soon will be; but it is impossible to keep on emigrating for ever. Tired of war, they yield to fate and try to find some *modus vivendi* with the new state of things, a bitter fruit which they have ripened themselves by the errors and violence resulting from pride of race complicated by religious exclusiveness. But this new circumstance, the non-emigration of the Mussulman population, causes new difficulties to spring up. The country will not be so safe in the neighbourhood of Kazanlik, as in the districts on the other side of the Balkans where the emigration has taken place. How can the peaceable peasant be distinguished—*a priori*—from the Bashi-bazouk in search of adventure? And how often will not the former have to suffer the penalty of the latter's sins? The Mussulmans will be disarmed. Be it so. But then a picket of Cossacks will be required in each of their villages to protect them against their Christian neighbours, among whom the rapid march of events has developed, as might have been expected, all the latent instincts of revenge and pillage which can smoulder under the cinders of four centuries of oppression. And yet these Christians must be armed; to do otherwise would be to hand them over defenceless to the mercy of the first party of Bashi-bazouks."

The explanations offered by this writer were intended to show why, in spite of the efforts of the Russian officers, it was impossible to stop the burning and plundering of abandoned Turkish

villages; or to insure, outside garrison towns, the security of the remaining Mussulman population. Ottoman politicians had thought it a master-piece of policy to, as it were, decapitate the Bulgarian nation, and prevent the creation of personal influence outside the narrow limits of the town or hamlet. The consequence was that now, even under the protection of the Russian army, there was no one able to command the attention of the masses, and stop them upon the slope of passionate reaction against their ancient oppressors.

The Bulgarian rising was very general in the district of Kazanlik; and the Russians were the less able to prevent its lamentable effects because they had themselves provoked it as an additional element of success against the Turks. In certain villages the inhabitants belonging to the two religions, both equally peaceable, concluded written conventions, according to which if the Turkish troops arrived first the Mussulmans were to protect the Christians, and *vice versa*; but these were very rare exceptions. The Russians were no sooner at Kazanlik, than from Yeni Saghra to Eski Saghra the country was on fire. Bands of Bulgarians assembled from various parts, and the reprisals commenced. From the heights of Kazanlik the burning villages could be seen stretching to the horizon.

On August 21 Suleiman Pasha, the Turkish Commander-in-chief south of the Balkans, sent a despatch to the First Secretary of the Sultan, which is given in the Blue Book presented to the English Parliament at the opening of the session of 1878, and in which he said—

"I swear by heaven that the bodies which I have seen with my own eyes, of Mussulman men, women, and children, massacred by the Cossacks and the Bulgarians on the road between Ferditch and Kazanlik, as well as in the villages and other spots situated in the neighbourhood of the two sides of the aforesaid road, and scattered over the fields, on the roads, and in the ditches, are innumerable. . . . The facts prove that the Bulgarians are determined to exterminate the population thus unjustly, and in the most cruel manner. At Offlandlik they have killed all the Mussulmans, men, women, and children, with the exception of one girl of seven years old, who was alone able to escape their cruelty. Besides the Mussulmans whom the Bulgarians and the Cossacks have massacred at the village of Ketch-

idéressi, near Kazanlik, yesterday evening they killed the seventy rescued Mussulmans and a large number of young girls of the same religion, who, preferring honour to life, had refused to give themselves up to the brutality of the Bulgarians. . . . None but the Russians and the Bulgarians could commit the innumerable atrocities which the people of Islam and all those who have a spark of humanity will remember with regret to the end of time, and which have been committed on the poor Mussulman populations, who by false and treacherous assurances have been completely disarmed and abandoned, like sheep with their feet tied, while their arms were handed over to the Bulgarians. Above all, unexampled atrocities have been perpetrated on women and children in the cradle, whom even savages would have respected. . . . Such fearful immoralities were committed on the murdered Mussulman women that it is impossible to relate them without a blush. In the whole army there is not a soldier who has not wept over the unhappy lot of these victims. Lastly, women and children were brought into the churches and forced to embrace Christianity. I regret to say that the resolution of these malefactors is to leave no trace of a Mussulman in the neighbourhood, and to accomplish in this manner the object of their mission."

It will thus be seen that the heavy charges made against the Bulgarians by the Turks, though in some instances exaggerated or untrue, were in many cases only too well founded. The subject will be again referred to further on, but an extract from Mr. Forbes' article, already noticed, will serve to show his estimate of the Bulgarian population. Speaking of the general treatment of the Bulgarians by the Turks under the heading of "The Turks," Mr. Forbes says:—

"I sincerely believe, on the evidence of my own eyes and ears, that the Turks—the dominant race in virtue of those characteristics which, until the millennium, will ever continue to insure the dominance of a race—allowed the Bulgarians—the subject race in virtue of those characteristics which, while they exist, will always make a race subject to some one or other—to have by no means a bad time of it. Proof of this belief I will adduce in detail, when I come to deal with the Bulgarians. But just cast a hasty glance at the conduct of the barbarian Turks during the

past two years. The period opens with the Bulgarians, subject indeed to the Turks; taxed, no doubt, heavily and arbitrarily; annoyed occasionally by a zaptieh, who must have been nearly as bad as the omnipotent 'agent' on the estate of an Irish absentee landlord, bound to dismount when encountering a Turk by the road, just as a rural inferior at home is virtually bound to touch his hat to his local superior; but withal, prospering mightily. The recently imported Circassians are a thorn in their flesh, against whom they have to put up iron bars and keep numerous fierce dogs—precautions which do not always avail; but the Circassian nuisance may be 'squared' by judicious occasional presents of poultry and farm produce to the moullah of the district. The Bulgarian population, it is true, are debarred from aspiring to any, even the meanest, public function; not even having the distinguished privilege, so much prized by the business Englishman, of being summoned on a jury when private avocations are exceptionally engrossing. To judge by the manner in which the Bulgarian civic functionaries appointed by Prince Tcherkasky are presently fulfilling their duties, from the municipal councillor who is making haste to be rich by pillaging alike casual Russian and resident countryman, to the street policeman of Tirnova or Gabrova, who, clothed in a little brief authority, whacks about him indiscriminately with his rattan, it may be questioned whether the general progress of the world was seriously retarded by the enforced abstinence of the Bulgarians from a share in the management of public affairs.

"It was no doubt a sad thing that the stalwart manhood of the Bulgarians was debarred from proving in the defence of the country that it had a heart in keeping with its thews and sinews, although circumstances may inspire a doubt whether the iron of this prohibition ate deeply into the Bulgarian heart. The country was badly governed, or rather in effect it was hardly governed at all; and this is exactly the state of things in which the astute man who knows the trick of buying protection is sure to get on by no means badly. I do not mean to say that it was all smooth and pleasant for the Bulgarians, or indeed for any of the races of which the population of Turkey in Europe is made up; but their lot, from all I have been able to learn, was tolerable enough. It seems to have been a lot for which the practical

British philanthropist would gladly see a considerable section of his fellow country people exchange their own wretched, sodden, hopeless plight. The life of the Bulgarian was eminently preferable to that of the miserable victims of the 'sweater,' who exist rather than live in White-chapel garrets. I think Devonshire Giles, with his nine shillings a week and a few mugs of cider, would cheerfully have put up with the zaptieh, exclusion from a share in the management of public affairs—although his home share of that privilege is so large and so highly prized—and would have even been resigned under the dispensation of debarment from military service, for the sake of the rich acres of pasture and barley land, the cattle and brood mares of the rural Bulgarian. I know that the Russian peasant soldier, who has crossed the Danube as the 'deliverer' of the Bulgarian from 'oppression,' feels with a stolid bewildered envy that, to use a slang phrase, he would be glad indeed 'to have half his complaint.'

"The times, no doubt, had a certain roughness, and occasionally there were Bulgarians who could not accept the roughs with the smooths, and who kicked against the pricks. There have been Irishmen who have manifested active discontent with the rule of the 'hated Saxon,' and who have been made to suffer for their peculiar way of looking at things. The discontented Bulgarians were sometimes sent to prison, but mostly escaped into neutral territory without undergoing this infliction; and wherever they found themselves—in Bucharest, in Galatz, up among the hills at Cronstadt, or down in the flat at Krajovo or Turn Severin—there they sedulously plotted against the Turkish dominance over the Bulgaria from which they were exiles. I suppose they had a right to do this, and to strive to implicate in their plots their brethren who still remained 'oppressed,' if prosperous: only the man who plots and the man who joins a plot must, like the man who speculates, be prepared to take the consequences of failure.

"As for the argument that the Turks were new-comers and have no abiding places in European Turkey, but that their tenure there is but the empire of superior power—if that is to be admitted and acted on, there logically follows a revolution in the face of the world, and all but universal chaos. We must quit India, and bid an apolo-

getic adieu to the Maori, the Kaffir, and the Hottentot; the Spaniard, from whom we wrested Gibraltar; the Dutchman, from whom we masterfully took the Cape. We are to take ship from the jetties over which frown the Heights of Abraham, and leave the French *habitants* and the remnant of red men left at Cachnawaga to settle between them the ownership of Canada East. Poland must revolt against Austria, Prussia, Russia; the Tartars of the Crimea are to make a struggle for independence; the Irish are to drive forth the Saxon Viceroy and his myrmidons at the point of the shillelagh; the Austro-Hungarian Empire shall blaze into a chaotic conflagration, in which 'furious Frank and fiery Hun,' Serb, Magyar, Croat, and Teuton shall seethe confusedly.

"The Bulgarians who abode at home, ignoring their substantial prosperity, and stimulated by their grudge against the Turk by reason of his masterfulness and his religion, tempted further by encouragement that came to them from Russian sources in Constantinople, listened to the voice of their exiled countrymen persuading them to insurrection. Persistent efforts have been made to minimize the radius and importance of the organization of that uprising which collapsed so futilely, and for which the penalty was so tragic. But these efforts can avail nothing before hard facts. When Tcherniaieff was in England last winter, he detailed to me the widespread ramifications of the organization for revolt all over Bulgaria, north as well as south of the Balkans, of which documentary evidence and fullest verbal assurances were furnished to him by the various committees outside Bulgaria, as he passed through the south of Russia and Roumania on his way to Servia. I could name several gentlemen with whom Tcherniaieff, during the same visit, entered into the fullest particularity of details on this subject. It was by reason of the assurances of support and co-operation on which his knowledge of this organization entitled him to rely, that he dared to violate strict military considerations, and struck across the frontier into Bulgaria as soon as Servia had declared war. We know how feeble and patchy was the rising of the Bulgarians in reality; but that was owing, not to the scanty area of the organization, but to the unpracticality of the conspirators and the faint-heartedness of the instruments. There was no outbreak at all north of the Balkans; but do not let it be supposed, therefore,

that there was no organization for revolt. At Poradim, just before the July battle of Plevna, I, in company with a Russian staff-officer of high position, fell in with a Bulgarian who, now a thriving villager there, had during the previous year been the agent in Plevna of the American Book Society. Six years previously he had been imprisoned for active disaffection, but had regained his liberty by bribery. He had been the head centre of the insurrectionary organization, in and around Plevna, in 1875-76. He showed us the lists of membership and of subscription—the latter not particularly reckless in their liberality. Everything had been pre-arranged, but when the time came, there was not even a ‘cabbage garden’ rising. The conspirators realized that the theory and practice of insurrection were two very different things, and remained content with the former luxury. The ‘head centre’ had thought it prudent to relegate himself to village life, and to make a friend of the local moullah through the medium of presents of poultry.

“The Bulgarian risings, then, such as they were, occurred. The Turks probably were unacquainted with the extent of the organization, but we must assume that they at least knew something. For the rest, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*. They had their hands full already. Montenegro and the Herzegovina were harassing them sorely; Servia was getting ready for war with all the energy of which she was capable. Other insurrections threatened in other regions of the great incongruous Empire. This one, at least, was in the hollow of their hand; it must be crushed, stamped out, annihilated. The barbarian had got his provocation, and the savage strain in his blood went aboil. We all know what happened in the hapless regions where afterwards Mr. MacGahan wrote and Lady Strangford worked. It can be the task surely of no decent man to be the apologist of the Turkish wild beasts who ravaged and ravished in those fell days. But, on the other hand, indignation is misplaced against wild beasts, who simply do what ‘tis their nature to’ when provocation kindles the savage ‘streak’ in their nature. What is the use? It is folly to feel wroth with the elephant who goes ‘must’ and pulverizes his mahout. He is ‘must,’ and there is an end of it.

“But the Turkish barbarities, like the Bulgarian actual risings, were localized. Perhaps the Turks

were ignorant of the North Balkan complicity; perhaps they ignored it; perhaps, seeing it had come to nothing, they gave no heed to it at all. Be that as it may, in all my wayfarings, from the Lom near to the Vid, from the Danube to the Balkans, I could neither hear of nor find human being who had suffered because of the business of last year; and I am sure I inquired sedulously enough. I found no man scored with yataghan slashes, no woman with a story of outrage, which from my later experiences I believe she would have been frank enough with if she had cause to speak. Last year’s straw stack stands in the farmyard of every Bulgarian cottager; the colour of its thatch proves that his habitation is not an erection of yesterday. The two-year colt trots on the lea along with the dam and the foal. His buffaloes are mature in their ugliness; his wife’s white-metal water pails are pitted with the dints of years. And if the belongings of the rural Bulgarian furnish testimony to the hitherto stable security of his way of life, not less do the surroundings of the towns-people prove their abiding conviction of non-molestation. Of the vines whose leaves and tendrils spread with verdant green shade over the garden arbours of Sistova, and whose fruit clusters dangle on the brown fronts of Drenova’s old oaken houses, the gnarled stems are as thick as my wrist. Pretty Maritza of Tirnova shows you proudly her blooming balsams, and tells you how she took the trouble to bespeak the seed a year in advance from a famous balsam cultivator across the Balkans in Kazanlik. It is to be doubted now whether he will ever grow balsams more. Her mother displays the yet remaining large stock of her last autumn’s preservings. And, by the way, it was of this same mother that the tale was written to England how the Pasha had informed her he would hang her, and indeed had even fixed the day for the operation, on the charge of concealing some obnoxious personage. I was given to understand, indeed, that some unpleasant communications had passed between the Pasha and the good lady; but how much, or little, she was perturbed thereby, may be gathered from the fact that she did not desist from her placid preparation of paprika paste—no, not on the very day named or reported to have been named for disqualifying her from the further enjoyment of that dainty.

“The Turkish soldiers, when the Russians made

good their footing on the southern bank of the Danube, evacuated Sistova without so much as breaking a twig on the front of a Bulgarian house. Their civilian brethren had already departed with like unanimity of harmlessness. The disorganized bands of soldiers fell back through the rural villages, without so much as filching a Bulgarian goose or requisitioning a Bulgarian egg. A Turkish army abode for days around Biela, and finally departed, its rear-guard consisting of irregulars, without a jot of injury wrought on the town-folk or their property. All along the Turkish retreat from the Jantra to the Lom, the Bulgarian experienced the same immunity. The Turkish inhabitants quitted, and the Turkish troops ran away from Tirnova, without a blow or a robbery. It may, in fine, be said that the Turks departed absolutely harmlessly out of the territory from the Danube to the Balkans, of which the Russians stood possessed when their area of occupation was largest. How the Bulgarians requited this forbearance—or immunity, if the other word seems to ask too much—will have to be told later.

“As the Russians have drawn in from the outskirts of that area, and the Turks have occupied the vacated territory, the immunity has ceased. It is not given to barbarians to accept with Christian resignation or civilized phlegm the spectacle of their dwellings wantonly razed, their crops stolen and sold, their little garden patches obliterated. They know that the miseries they find unaccountably remaining in the villages, deprived of Russian protection, were the culprits. They know that these welcomed the enemy of the Turk, acted as his guides, served him as spies, and found in him a customer for the Turkish crops. They know that these hung on the rear of the hapless retreating Turkish villagers in July, and slew them ruthlessly—men, women, and children—when the safe chance offered. So the ‘unspeakable’ Turk lets the rough edge of his barbarism come uppermost again, and perpetrates atrocities—inflicts reprisals? Bah! what matters it about a form of words?”

Proceeding to deal more particularly with the third division of his subject, “The Bulgarians,” Mr. Forbes continues:—

“I have found it impossible to avoid saying a good deal of the Bulgarians when writing under the preceding heading, and so much are the two subjects intermingled that, in writing under the

present heading, I cannot hope wholly to exclude reference to the Turks. It must be understood that, as I have never been across the Balkans, my observations in the character of a witness must be held as applying exclusively to the Bulgarians between that range and the Danube within the region of the Russian occupation. Nor must it be forgotten that this country is Bulgaria proper, where the Bulgarian race is purest; the Roumelian Bulgarians are affected, whether for good or evil, by a considerable miscellaneous intermixture of other races.

“An outspoken Russian of my acquaintance, after a large campaigning experience of them, gave it as his belief regarding the North-Balkan Bulgarians that they must either be the result of a temporary lapse in the creative vigilance, or that they must be accepted as a refutation of the Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest. My Russian friend had doubtless good cause of disgust at the Bulgarians, but I venture to regard his expressions as rather too strong. My experience of the Bulgarians, indeed, is that they have fewer of the attributes calculated to kindle sympathetic regard and beget genial interest, than any other race of whose character I have had opportunities of judging. But they have some good points, more especially the rural Bulgarians. They have prospered by reason of sedulous industry practised, to some extent at least, under arduous conditions, and this is an unquestionable merit. Their prosperity has, indeed, been used as an argument why the Turks, whose bent is far from being so keenly toward industry, and who accordingly do not display evidences of so great material prosperity, should therefore cease to be the master people. It is not for me to combat this or any other argument; but I may venture to suggest that if a maximum of prosperity is to be regarded as the criterion, we Britons must retire *en masse* into private life in favour of the Jewish element in our midst. It tells doubtless in favour of the Bulgarian that he is in name a Christian; although his ‘evidences of Christianity,’ so far as I have cognizance of them, consist chiefly in his piously crossing himself in starting to drive a vehicle for the hire of which he has charged double a liberally reasonable sum, after having profusely invoked the name of the Saviour to corroborate his asseverations that the price he asks is ruinously low. He cannot be denied a certain candour, which

sometimes has a cynical flavour in it, as when he coolly tells a Russian, who in the character of his 'deliverer' is remonstrating against his withholding of supplies or his extortionate charges for them, that 'the Turk was good enough for him, and that he didn't want deliverance.' The Bulgarian is singularly adaptive. He realized his 'deliverance' with extreme promptitude of perception, resulting in bumptious arrogance. He drove his ox-cart with nonchalant obstinacy in the only practicable rut, and grinned affably when your carriage springs were broken in scrambling out of it to pass him. In the towns he held the crown of the causeway; in the country regions, near the forepost lines, he sees it to be expedient to pursue the career of a double spy and a double traitor.

"In the preceding section I have spoken at length of his material prosperity prior to the arrival of the 'deliverers.' The two races—Turk and Bulgarian—dwelt apart; and the Bulgarian, as he drove his wainload of bearded wheat, or his herd of plump cattle and fertile brood mares down the slope to his white cottage among its corn-stacks bowered among the trees by the fountain, must often have smiled grimly as his eye caught the barer farm-yards and the scantier comfort of the Turkish quarter, and the ramshackle hovels among the scrappy tobacco-plots of the Circassian squatters on or beyond the outskirts of the village. The Bulgarian kept the village shop, and the Turk, when he came for his necessaries, had to sniff the hated odour of pork sausages. The village swarmed with Christian pigs, free to roam into the Turkish quarter till chevied by Moslem dogs. If in the towns and large villages the Bulgarian ear had to put up with the call of the Muezzin from the minaret of a mosque, the Osmanli were fain to tolerate the clangour of the bells from the glittering towers of floridly ornate Christian churches. For every mosque in Bulgaria there are at least three churches. Draw near to Sistova from what direction you will, the sparkle of the metallic covering of the towers of churches, imposing in all the showy garishness of Byzantine architecture, first meets the eye. From the Russian batteries on the blood-stained height of Radisovo you discern where lies Plevna nestling among the foliage, not by the slender white minarets, but by the glittering domes and stately spires of her Christian churches.

"If ever one race owed a deep obligation to another, the Bulgarians did to the Turks, for the forbearance of the latter in leaving them and theirs unmolested in the evacuation before the advancing Russians in the last days of June and July. The non-molestation on the part of those 'unspeakable' barbarians was as thorough as that on the part of the last remnant of the German army of occupation, which Manteuffel marched from out the gates of Verdun through fertile Lorraine and over the new frontier line bisecting the battle-field of Gravelotte. And how was this forbearance requited—a forbearance that might have gone far to dim the memory of the conventional 'four centuries of oppression?' The moment the last Turk was gone from Sistova—not before, for your Bulgarian is not fond of chancing contingencies—the Bulgarians of that town betook themselves to the sack, plunder, and destruction of the dwellings vacated by the Turks. They might have served an apprenticeship with the Circassians, so dexterous and efficient was their handiwork. I have seen few dismaller spectacles than that presented by the Turkish quarter of Sistova when I visited it two days after the crossing. To me, as representing a journal whose goodwill the Bulgarians cherished, the Bulgarian *patres conscripti* of Sistova strove to mitigate the disgrace of this wanton outrage. It had been wrought by the scum of the place, while as yet order had not succeeded to anarchy; the Cossacks had had a hand in it, which was a lie; the town was ashamed of the outburst of spite, for which nevertheless it was hinted there was some palliation in the 'four hundred years of oppression.' But stern measures had been taken to arrest any further devastation (there was little left to wreck); a committee had been formed to collect into the care of the authorities all the plunder; penalties had been enacted for its retention, and the effects were to be stored to await the return of the owners, to whom in the meantime—some of them being understood not to have gone far—overtures were to be sent begging their return and assuring them of safety. I went out from among the *patres conscripti*, and ascending the staircase in the minaret of a mosque which had been wrecked and defiled, saw from the summit Bulgarian youths pursuing unchecked the work of wanton destruction on outlying Turkish houses. If the committee was ever formed at all, no results followed. The

plunder remained with the plunderers; nobody was punished.

"The conscript fathers of Sistova told me also, that to save Bulgaria's discredit in the eyes of Europe, emissaries would be sent out into the villages and towns, praying their inhabitants to behaviour more worthy of civilization than Sistova had been able to compass. If they were sent with such a message, it must have been read backwards by the recipients. In every town and village of Bulgaria whence the Turkish inhabitants have fled, their houses were at once wrecked, the huts of the Circassians burnt to the ground. Colonel Lennox and Lord Melgund must be able to testify with how great order the Turks evacuated Biela. I can speak to the unharmed state of the place, when I entered it while as yet the Turkish irregulars were not out of sight. I can speak also to the zest with which its Bulgarian inhabitants began to wreak their spite on the houses of the Turks, as soon as they believed that the presence of Arnoldi's dragoons on the heights above the place deprived the work of any risk. Before the Emperor came to Biela, it took some days to repair or clear away the dilapidations wrought in the Turkish Bey's house which he was to inhabit, and after all his Majesty could not but have noticed evidences of the ravage which had been wrought on it. Now this Bey was a special favourite of the Biela Bulgarians. He had effectually kept Bashi-bazouks and Circassians from molesting them; and they had begged the good man not to go, assuring him that they would tell the Russians how much they owed him. He had to reply that his orders from Constantinople were imperative, and farewells passed with protestations of mutual goodwill. If the Bey had thought better of it, and had come back next day, he would have returned to a house wrecked by his well-wishers of the day before. For aught I know, the fittings and timbers of the abandoned Turkish houses of Tirnova still furnish its Bulgarian inhabitants with their supplies of firewood. This was so the last time I was in Tirnova, in the end of August."

The foregoing deductions are chiefly drawn from the writer's observations on the north of the Balkans. Of the period which followed the passage of the Hainkoi Pass Mr. Forbes thus wrote:—

"Let me say a few words on what was virtually the civil war between the Turks and Bulgarians, which fringed the edges of

General Gourko's operations across the Balkans. I speak, it is true, from hearsay evidence, but there could be no better nor more direct hearsay evidence. The Bulgarians begged arms of the Russians, and received them; then, hot with the fell memories of last year, and conscious that Russians were with and for them, they fell on the Turks with the most ruthless reprisals. Be it understood I am not blaming them for what they did. I neither praise any one nor blame any one. But this I say, that all the Turks are reported as having done on their re-occupation of the districts, the Turkish grip on which was temporarily let go by reason of Gourko's raid, is on credible evidence not one whit more barbarous than was the conduct of the Bulgarians towards the Turks when Gourko's star was in the ascendant. The barbarian has acted like a savage in his reprisals; the Christian acted equally like a savage in what were virtually his reprisals for what happened a year previously. The one 'terror' has but followed on the other. Apologists for the proven barbarity of the Bulgarians—men who acknowledge that they saw them driven away with horror by Russian officers from their work of slaughtering Turkish wounded, over whom an advancing Russian column had passed—advanced the plea, *ad culpam minuendam*, that the Bulgarians have at least not ravished. There is told a different tale in the sad spectacle of the four Jewish ladies, sisters, now forlornly resident in the house of a merchant banker in Bucharest of their own faith—outraged by God knows what ruffianism of uncounted Bulgarians in sight of their own father as he lay dying, murdered in his own house in Karlovo."

This article by Mr. Forbes, from which we have so freely quoted on account of its great importance and evident impartiality, gave rise to considerable discussion. Mr. Gladstone, as already stated, whilst bearing testimony to the writer's high ability, disputed many of his conclusions which were adverse to the Bulgarian population. Mr. Edward A. Freeman, the historian, likewise admitted Mr. Forbes' "perfect truthfulness of statement as to everything that came under his own eye," but considered "there was much in the article which was fallacious and mischievous." Another writer, the Rev. Malcolm MacColl, who took an active interest in the movement for affording aid to the Russian sick and wounded in the

war, also entered the list of malcontents, and quoted against Mr. Forbes the opinion of Mr. MacGahan, another correspondent of the *Daily News*, as follows:—

“But it has been said and reiterated a thousand times that the Bulgarians are just as bad as the Turks, and principally on the grounds that the Bulgarians did commit the acts I have just enumerated—that is, because the Bulgarians smashed a few doors and windows, looted a few houses, and burnt half-a-dozen abandoned villages in revenge for cattle-lifting, the Turcophile jumps to the conclusion that the Bulgarians murdered thousands of women and children, that they violated women and young girls, that they roasted people alive, that they spitted babes on the points of pikes and bayonets, and that they left thousands of bodies of women and children, of young girls and infants, to rot in the fields, a prey to the dogs and crows. I make the assertion, and I make it without fear of contradiction, that on this side of the Balkans, and in the valley of the Tunja, the Bulgarians did not commit any of the acts I have just enumerated—that they have done nothing to justify the assertion that they are as bad as the Turks. I have not seen a single correspondent, or other disinterested person, who said he saw any such acts committed by Bulgarians, or who saw anything which led him to believe that such acts had been committed. I have hitherto only discussed what occurred within the sphere of my observation and that of other correspondents within the Russian lines, which comprises, I think, everything that occurred north of the Tunja.”

Having quoted the above passage from Mr. MacGahan, Mr. MacColl met the conclusions of Mr. Forbes in the following terms:—

“I have studied the Eastern Question very carefully and conscientiously. I have read and analyzed all the official documents on the condition of the Christians of Turkey published by the British Government since the Crimean War. I have also read works published on the subject by standard authors, English and Foreign, including the names of Strangford, Ranke, and Kanitz, and I find them all agreeing that the Christians of Turkey, Bulgarians included, are horribly oppressed, and long for deliverance from their cruel bondage.”

By far the most important contribution on the subject was, however, an elaborate article from

the pen of Colonel Brackenbury, the military correspondent of the *Times* in the early part of the war. Colonel Brackenbury's testimony is of the highest importance, not only from his professional experience and carefully weighed conclusions, but because, to use his own words, he was “the only correspondent who saw these things from first to last, from the banks of the Danube to the rose gardens of Roumelia.” Colonel Brackenbury's article appeared in the *Times*, about a month after the publication of Mr. Forbes' article in the *Nineteenth Century*, and in it he says:—

“The interesting article by Mr. Archibald Forbes, in the last number of the *Nineteenth Century*, might well be left to speak for itself, and would certainly not have been noticed by me, had I not been called upon by certain friends to do so, as the only Englishman who advanced with the Russian cavalry from the banks of the Danube to Tirnova, and thence to the other side of the Balkans with General Gourko. Mr. MacGahan, an American, arrived at Tirnova the day General Gourko left it, and pushed on afterwards, overtaking the rear of the column; but suffered a severe fall in the Pass, and reached Hainkoi a day after it was taken in such a plight that nothing but the indomitable resolution of a brave man would have caused him to follow the advance to Kazanlik two days after the march of the force. To the great regret of all who knew him, he was laid up during the whole of our stay at Kazanlik, and no other correspondent crossed the Balkans until some days after General Gourko's capture of the Shipka Pass. No correspondent at all, except myself, went with the advanced cavalry from the Danube to Tirnova; and no other, except a Russian correspondent of an illustrated Russian newspaper, accompanied the force from Tirnova to Kazanlik. The exceptional opportunity which I, therefore, had for seeing Bulgaria as it was left by the Turks and remained during the early part of the Russian occupation, seems to involve exceptional responsibility; and for that reason alone I respond to the appeal which has been made to me, to support or deny the statements so brilliantly put forward by the pen of Mr. Forbes.

“In the first place, then, it must be said that there is hardly a single assertion now made by Mr. Forbes which I am unable to confirm, and very few which have not already been published

in letters which I wrote at the time or since to the *Times*. Nor is it easy to understand why Mr. Forbes should dread the loss of friends because he writes now what he and others wrote either from the hills of Bulgaria or the streets of Bucharest. Among those who saw the campaign, or any part of it, there are not two opinions as to the character of the Russian officers and men. Let us see what Mr. Forbes has to say on the subject. He found them delightful comrades, of inexhaustible good humour, light-hearted under hardship, humane, of a genuine, if unobtrusive, humanity, never decrying an enemy. Only two boorish and discourteous officers ever came across his path; and so far from finding the Russians of a suspicious nature, he agrees with what struck all observers, and was duly told in my letters to the *Times*, that the frank simplicity of the army amounted to a serious military error. Perhaps the correspondents of the *Daily News* were alone in the good fortune of receiving 'advice, a week or so in advance, to betake themselves to specified points where interest was likely to develop itself;' but all must have felt that, even with a secret to conceal, the Russians hid it as children do when, with smiling faces and little hands too small to cover the 'secret' they clutch, they exclaim, 'You don't know what I have got here.' Because of this simplicity, I cannot for the life of me believe in the depth of Russian diplomacy. One crafty and cunning head there may be here and there; but the eyes must be dull indeed which are unable to read the minds of most of them. Mr. Forbes tells us, further, that the Russian officer has the splendid valour of his nationality, and is no braggart. The soldier is the 'finest material for a soldier that the soldier-producing world affords,' an extraordinary weight-carrying marcher, and ready to fight, whether fresh or weary, empty or full. He can live on small rations, never grumbles, is sincerely pious and full of whole-hearted devotion to the Czar; but needs direction by good officers, probably for the same reasons which make him so docile. Yet, even if dazed and bewildered by the occurrence of unexpected circumstances, he does not fall into panic, but stands up to be killed 'in piteously noble stubbornness of ignorance' if no officer orders him to retreat.

"How different is this picture from that of the brutal, ignorant boor so often represented in col-

ours thickly plastered on by men who have never seen the original, yet hold up the counterfeit presentment of a brute to the English public, and write under it, 'The Russian Soldier.' But is he not cruel? Has he not committed a thousand atrocities vouched for by official despatches from the Porte? 'No,' says Mr. Forbes, 'certainly not, at any rate, north of the Balkans;' and here I can add to the statement, and say as he says, and in his words, 'On soul and conscience I believe the allegations thereof to be utterly false.' To assert that there never was a case of murder or cruelty would be to make an assertion incapable of proof and extremely improbable, for there must be black sheep in every flock; but I do say that the Russian army was exceptionally humane when compared with other armies that I have seen in the field, and perhaps less than any other deserves to be branded as cruel. On the march from the Danube towards Tirnova, when the village of Batak was occupied by the dragoon brigade of the Duke Eugene of Leuchtenberg, some shots were fired from a house at Russian soldiers and officers walking in the street. The men who did the deed were taken captive, treated with clemency and kindness, and sent next day to the rear to be judged by military law. Every day armed men were captured in civil dress and brought up to head-quarters for examination. With one accord they put the strange and suggestive question, 'What death are we to die?' to an audience which, half-amused, half-indignant, always replied, 'We are Christians, and don't kill prisoners. Do you take us for Turks?' At Tirnova there remained a few Turks, who were treated with special kindness, and told that protection would be extended to them and to all that might come in. The soldiers were not even quartered upon the inhabitants, and during the many hours that elapsed before an orderly government was set up in the town, there was not only no cruelty, but no parade of conquest. From the villages around came a mass of frightened Turkish men, women, and children, whom the Russians received and fed because they had fled from the Bulgarian peasants. Of this Bulgarian cruelty I will speak hereafter. At present, let us talk only of the Russians.

"At Kazanlik a very few Cossacks entered some of the Turkish houses and asked for money, which was given to them; but complaints were made at once to the authorities, and a prompt end was put

to all such irregularities. I could never trace a single act of barbarity on the part of the Russians. Yet men were not ashamed to come to me with such trivial complaints as that a Cossack had snatched off a *fez* in the streets. I should certainly have known of any really cruel excesses had they occurred, just as I did know of such excesses on the part of the Bulgarians.

"On the day when the Shipka Pass was taken by the troops of General Gourko, there was to be seen a strange spectacle. Within a couple of hundred yards were two groups of men; on this side Turks, on that Russians. The Turks were prisoners, guarded with all care, but treated with mercy, and almost tenderness. They were being supplied with food and water. Those of them who were wounded were under the hands of Russian surgeons, who were dressing the wounds with every care. And there were surgeons enough for the task, because they had no Russian wounded to attend to—not one. Every man who had fallen under the fire of the Osmanli the day before, when the attack had been repulsed, lay in that other group, headless and hideously mangled. Their living bodies had been subjected to torture and mutilation of the most insulting kind. Their comrades, men of the same race and even of the same brigade, looked on the awful spectacle, turned away, and with mingled wrath and grief in their hearts washed the wounds of the men who had done that terrible deed. This is no hearsay tale. I saw it; and the scene was depicted by French and Spanish artists, who had arrived that day, too late to see the gallant fighting of the Russian tirailleurs, but not too late to record their terrible fate or the grand forbearance of their comrades. Yet at that time, and since, the favourite expression in England has been that with regard to cruelty it was 'six of one and half a dozen of the other.' Englishmen love fair play, and their recognition of this quality of mercy in the Russian character is only a question of time. I might quote instance upon instance of Russian kindness and mercy; might describe in detail how the prisoners who, in great numbers, delivered themselves up to the Cossacks, and were brought, without hurt or insult, to Kazanlik, were fed exactly like the Russian soldiers, and treated with honour; how the Turkish wounded had a hospital to themselves, under their own doctors, better found and cleaner than that of the Russians in the monastery. But

surely sufficient has been said to prove to all who will listen to the truth, that savagery is not a characteristic of the army which has invaded Turkey. Yet, lest any should imagine that the Russian soldier became less careful to show mercy as time went on south of the Balkans, it may be well to remind them that during the very last fight, when Gourko defeated Raouf Pasha after a severe fight, the tirailleurs, finding, as the struggle swayed backwards and forwards in the wood, that all their wounded comrades who fell into the hands of the Turks were treated as those others had been above Shipka, began to bayonet such of their enemy as they caught, without heed to whether they resisted or not; but were sternly checked by their officers, who said, 'Leave their punishment to God.' The expression had a meaning to them—for the Russian soldier is a religious animal—and the tirailleurs obeyed. . . .

"The Turks,' says Mr. Forbes, 'are barbarians pure and simple;' and he proceeds to express some surprise that they should pretend to any other character, instead of taking their stand on their own with a sort of grim *noli me tangere* challenge to aggressors. But this unmitigated barbarism of the Turk was just what his advocates denied for a long time, and even to this day the 'six of one and half-a-dozen of the other' argument is not extinct. There is no pleasure in detailing instances of crimes against humanity, and after the article in the *Nineteenth Century* it may be presumed that the unchanged and unchanging barbarism of the Turk will be generally accepted. It is, no doubt, true that latterly no terrible cruelties were perpetrated on the Bulgarians. By latterly I mean after all Europe had been excited too much by the massacres which ostensibly brought about this quarrel. But surely the reason for the late forbearance was the pressure put on the Porte by its best friends, and Mr. Forbes can hardly mean that he heard no stories of previous horrors. If so I envy him, for they came thickly enough upon me both at Tirnova and Kazanlik. They were all horrible, and some disgusting. If Mr. Forbes had entered Tirnova the first day and seen the agony of joy, the tears, the very madness of ecstasy that prevailed, he would hardly throw doubts on the reality of the terror. The inhabitants of the town had been distinctly told by the Turks that they would be massacred if the Russians advanced, only the

advance was so sudden when it came that there was no time except for flight. Who can doubt that if Duke Eugene had retired that day, instead of attacking boldly with his dismounted cavalry, the present fate of Kazanlik would have been anticipated by that of Tirnova? And as for desolating the country in advance of the cavalry, there was no force to desolate it. The two main armies were on either flank, and think how many men it would have taken to cut the corn over many thousands of acres, and to drive away herds of cattle that were almost innumerable. The soil of Bulgaria—at least that part of it—is so rich that, as no bad government has been able to make the people starve, so could no agency, except that of locusts, desolate it in a short time. Be it remembered that every disposition had been made to defend the Danube, and there was no idea of leaving the passage undisputed. So long as the Turkish armies were there, what sense could there be in desolating the land? If the line of the Danube had been left undefended, the whole history would bear a different aspect.

“With regard to sparing the Bulgarian population, we must not forget that the Bulgarians formed the bulk of the people on the north side of the Balkans, while there must remain a small proportion of Turks. Not knowing where the Russians would cross until the time was near at hand, it would have been necessary to drive away some 6,000,000 of people, and when the time was near the troops had enough to do with other occupations. If, like the Russians before Napoleon I., a whole people choose to leave their habitations and lay waste a thinly-peopled and poor country, they can do it; but the desolation of a country like Bulgaria would have taken several months to achieve, and roused the horror of Europe. I wish to give the Turks full honour for their really fine qualities—their bravery; their tolerance of other religions, which, though contemptuous, is none the less practically pleasant to the subject race; their faithfulness to their own religion and to the Sultan; but, after all that Mr. Forbes himself tells us, it would be rather absurd to pretend that Bulgaria was left undesolated from philanthropical scruples of conscience.

“There is some fallacy, too, in Mr. Forbes’ reasoning about the right of the Turks to hold their own in Europe. He uses an argument which will hardly stand a moment’s discussion.

We and other Powers have the moral right to hold possession of conquered countries only on condition of good government; and I would ask him whether or not he thinks that Italy had a moral right to strive for its emancipation from Austria, which was a far milder mistress than the Porte has been to the Bulgarians. The complaint against the Turk was, not that he taxed the subject people highly, but that they might not gather in their crops at all till he had assessed them and taken his share. Let a Bulgarian offend his task-master, and that year his crops were left to spoil before he was allowed to touch them. The evidence of the Bulgarian was of no more value in a court of justice than that of a negro in the Southern States before emancipation, and neither goods nor women were safe from the master who had cast a covetous eye on them.

“Yet a patient and rather degraded race—degraded by centuries of servitude—might have remained submissive for many more years but for the importation of the Circassians, whose wild ways and predatory habits were the last straw which broke the back of the people. To appreciate the state in which they lived it is necessary to remember that the Bulgarian houses had always barred windows, while those of the Turks needed no such safeguard, and that every family had its regular hiding-places, only too frequently necessary. It would be impossible to conceive Englishmen submitting to such humiliations, but then Bulgarians are not English. And now let us see what they are.

“Nothing is more evident than that the Bulgarians are what the Turks have made them, that they are dissatisfied with their present condition, and have been for some years ready to throw themselves into the arms of any nation which would undertake to support their cause against their masters. I do not wonder at the disgust with which Mr. Forbes speaks of them as a whole, for, speaking generally, it must be confessed that they are a most uninviting race. One has only to conceive all that one can imagine to be the opposite to the English gentleman, and behold the Bulgarian. The uneducated men of both towns and villages are dirty, submissive, and greedy of pelf; the educated are, for the most part, conceited and languid. But it would be unfair to forget that they have been practically enslaved for four centuries, that they have not been allowed to

govern even their own people, that service in the army has been denied them, and that they have been systematically deprived of all the rights of free men. Hunted by Pashas and police agents, unable to give evidence against a Turk, or to count even their women as safe from the spoiler, what answer is it to their aspirations for freedom that they are allowed, like cows, to live in rich pastures in order that their masters may milk them? I do not agree with Mr. Forbes that 'Devonshire Giles, with his nine shillings a week and a few mugs of cider, would cheerfully have put up with the zaptieh, exclusion from a share in the management of public affairs—although his home share of that privilege is so large and so highly prized—and would even have been resigned under the dispensation of debarment from military service, for the sake of the rich acres of pasture and barley land, the cattle and brood mares, of the rural Bulgarian.' It is just because the forefathers of Devonshire Giles would not submit to be mere well-fed beasts of burden that England is now the greatest, freest, and, on the whole, happiest nation on earth. The hopeless degradation of a people is attained when they accept tyranny for the sake of the *panem et Circenses*; and about the best point in the character of the Bulgarians is that they refuse to accept the dishonour of their lives under the same conditions. Nor is it at all likely that the 'Russian soldier . . . would be glad to have half his complaint.' Glad to live in such a fertile country he might be, but not under the same conditions—not under Turkish government as it was, but will probably never be again. How curiously the minds of men can be warped by political prejudice was shown by an Englishman at Bucharest, who, hearing that the Turks had nailed a baby to a gate-post, exclaimed that the ladies of England would fancy it was a white baby, whereas it was probably dark skinned. By the by, many of the Bulgarians are fair skinned, with light hair.

"But is it true that a great and general prosperity prevails in Bulgaria? I am told by friends who have travelled in other parts of the country, that neither is the soil always so rich nor the people so well removed from misery; and though there appeared to be plenty to eat wherever one went, the huts of the villagers were often wretched, always dirty, and filled with vermin. With ideas of a better life, and a desire to attain to a higher

civilization, the Bulgarian has small hopes of progress. He is ever toiling to move his condition upwards, but finds the trial too hard for him. Mr. Forbes entirely admits that the cruelties perpetrated during the suppression of the rising were not exaggerated, and there is, therefore, no need to refer to them; but if it be true, and nobody denies it, that Maritza's mother was threatened with hanging, why should she be mocked at because she continued to make the poprika paste, which is a daily article of diet, or to boil fruit for preserves, which are offered to every guest who enters the house of a well-to-do Bulgarian? Whatever be the danger, men must eat, and one of the commonest statements with regard to a convict on the morning of his execution is that he breakfasted with fair appetite. Surely the matron in question is not to blame, because she did not anticipate the work of the hangman by starving herself. No doubt there was at one time an excess of sentimental feeling in England about 'Bulgarian atrocities'—not that there is any question as to the occurrence of them, but because there was nothing new in the matter, and because the old and never-ending feud between masters and slaves always has and always must produce such results. They were true, but not new.

"As the Russians advanced the Bulgarians began at once to pillage the houses left by the Turks, but nothing worse occurred within the Russian lines. The pillagers were checked, scolded, and even beaten by the Russians, to their great astonishment. Without doubt they imagined that liberty would be given to them to take back the goods of which they declared the Turks had robbed them. In some cases, even north of the Balkans, they drove Turkish men, women, and children out of their villages. But the very first day Gourko's column issued from the Hainkoi Pass, the smoke of burning villages began to deface the landscape outside the Russian lines. As we marched on Kazanlik we began to see bodies of Bulgarian peasants lying in the fields with their throats cut, and shortly after the whole country outside the Russian outposts became the scene of mutual slaughter and burning. The devil was let loose, and I should be sorry to judge whether he reigned highest in the hearts of Turks or of Bulgarians. Horror at the fearful catastrophe which their coming had wrought reigned throughout the Russian army, and, from the highest to the lowest, all

Gourko's force strained at the leash, longing to push forward and overawe the murderers, whether Turks or Bulgarians. At that time—long before the feeling spread northwards—the Russians began to be shocked and ashamed of the deeds of those they came to save. To their minds the revengeful brutality of the Bulgarians was horrible and incomprehensible, and from that moment they looked upon their fellow Slaves as an English family would regard a member who was disgracing them. The sentiment, like that evoked by the old 'Bulgarian atrocities,' was true and right, but exaggerated. Whatever may have been the schemes of individuals, the Russian people and army had undoubtedly entered upon the war full of warmth and sympathy towards an oppressed nation which they felt to be akin to themselves; and when they found the Bulgarians almost emulating the horrible deeds of their old masters, a reaction of feeling set in which carried them as far beyond the bounds of wisdom as they had before been carried when undertaking a Quixotic plan of deliverance. It seems to me that Mr. Forbes has been carried away by the same generosity of feeling towards the Turks and against the Bulgarians, and in his indignation loses sight of the awful provocation which that unhappy people had received.

"When I first saw the Bulgarian Legion near Ploesti, and talked to the men, I found them one and all embued with a spirit of vengeance against the Turks, and was asked how I could wonder at it when almost every man there had some personal or family dishonour to avenge. When that vengeance began no one wrote in deeper horror at it than I; but for all that, I recognized then, as now, that their condition of mind was like that of the French lower classes before the great Revolution, or of the Italians when assassination of tyrants was pronounced holy. The facts were hideous, but only too comprehensible, and the massacres that occurred were even at that time commenced by the Turks. To say nothing of the bodies of murdered Bulgarians which lay on the route by which we marched upon Kazanlik, a scene occurred at Yeni Saghra which fired the hearts of all who heard it. Two squadrons of Cossacks were sent towards the town, almost immediately after Gourko crossed the Balkans. Finding it occupied by a Turkish force, they did not enter, but unhappily some of the

inhabitants went out to meet them, hoping that deliverance had come. For this the Turks exacted an awful retribution. Not a sword had been drawn, not a shot fired; but scarcely had we arrived at Kazanlik when horrified fugitives came in from Eski Saghra with news that, in their prosperous little town, the market-place was filled with some 300 dead bodies of their murdered countrymen. From that moment all hope of restraining the people was gone, and the spirit of vengeance prevailed over the merciful precepts of Christianity. The Bulgarians did thereafter show a cruel and unforgiving spirit; but they only followed the example set them by an enemy against whom they had sworn undying hatred. In palliation of the crimes of the Turks, Mr. Forbes quotes cruelties enacted by other nations, English among the number. If there is to be any excuse, surely the Bulgarians, who had been as sheep among wolves, are entitled to claim some share in the condonation of murder? Yet, let there be no mistake. Never until Gourko was in full retreat did the Bulgarians perpetrate such crimes within sight of the Russians, and then only in isolated instances. Mr. Forbes brings another charge against this wretched people—namely, that they evince a spirit of grasping avarice in their dealings with the Russians. But there are two sides to this question also. Moving, as I did, always with the most advanced troops of the Russians, I am able to state that nothing could exceed the warmth and lavish hospitality of the people both in towns and villages. They brought all they had to give—bread, meat, and wine—and offered them free of charge. I had difficulty in prevailing on them to accept money from me, and their kindness and helpfulness were on all occasions most conspicuous. Only once was an attempt at extortion made, and then on appeal to a member of the Bulgarian Governing Committee in Kazanlik, I was told at once to pay nothing, and then and there I paid what seemed just. But such open-handed generosity could not go on for ever among a poor people, for they are poor, though not starving from want of food; and when it was found that no sudden deliverance was about to descend on them, but, instead, a long Russian occupation, the nature of long-enslaved peasants reasserted itself, and the people whose homes were in many cases ruined, whose crops were beaten down by the march and struggle of

armies, endeavoured to gain what they could out of roving Englishmen and Russian officers. It was not high-minded, but it was natural, especially as by that time the benefits that Russian occupation was to bring seemed far off, while the pressure of that occupation was heavy.

"The truth with regard to the Bulgarians appears to be, that they have many of the defects which one would expect in a people out of whom for four centuries all high qualities have been studiously and relentlessly driven. In the midst of one of the most fertile districts in Europe they were not starved, but kept as the milch cows of their masters. Instead of serving in the army, they were degraded by being made to pay a special tax, out of which Pashas drew the means of keeping them under. Their property and their honour—and on some subjects they have high notions of honour—were at the mercy of a race whom they hated; and when they began to welcome education with avidity, their efforts towards enlightenment were met by filling their country with swarms of Circassians, whom the Turks themselves say they could not govern. They were frugal and saving only to be relentlessly taxed; they tried to educate themselves, and at the heels of the schoolmaster came the murderous Circassian. A feeble attempt to assert their claims to be treated as human beings was put down with such ferocity as excited even England, until we remembered that the savagery of the Turk was an old and stale story. Under these conditions, who can wonder that they welcomed the first strong hand stretched out to help them, or start with surprise at acts of vengeance, however heartily we may condemn them?"

"So, then, we have the Russians, brave, religious, impulsive, but only half developed, because the governing powers have not yet relinquished the idea of making money out of the governed; the Bulgarians, commonplace and full of irritating clownishness, but aspiring strongly to become educated and civilized. These two speak almost the same language, and are bound together by many ties of sympathy. Between them stands the Turk, without any pretence of humanity—at least Mr. Forbes says that he would be wise to have none—only reiterating that he does not see why he should not 'wallop his own nigger.' In the meantime, some of the richest and loveliest lands in the world are thrown away, and rendered

practically inaccessible. No one who is at all informed on the subject supposes that Russia will be allowed by Europe to take them, and surely no one thinks or hopes that the old, bad dominion of the Turk can be renewed without modification. If, when the crash comes, any real interests of ours are attacked, let us by all means defend them by arms if necessary; but we shall go to the work with cleaner hands and clearer consciences if we now steadfastly avoid bringing railing accusations against those with whom we may possibly have to strive."

The great interest which attached to the discussion of the questions raised above will be the only apology needed for the length of our quotations, which we will close with a few more observations addressed to the *Times* in a previous letter by Colonel Brackenbury, in which he said:—

"Another point which seems to be of great interest is this: How do the Russians and Bulgarians stand towards each other in point of sympathy? When first the troops of the Czar entered Bulgaria, there could be no question as to the sympathy between them and the people of the country. Without entering on the causes which led to the Bulgarian rebellion, it may be sufficient to say that the condition of the Bulgarians when the Russians crossed the Danube was that of a people living in daily terror of death, threatened with dishonour, massacre, and cruelty of every description. These people were no heroes, but thrifty peasants, not at all anxious for martyrdom, though tenacious of their religion in the face of the direst peril. In all that may be said against them let this fact stand for ever in their favour. When life and death were in the balance, these poor, stupid, suffering peasants clung to their faith. In the midst of their trembling came suddenly and swiftly an army, which, being concentrated, must have appeared to them innumerable. The soldiers were of their own faith, and almost of their own speech. They prayed Christian prayers, sang Christian hymns, and brought with them the promise that freedom and Christianity should for the future rule in the land. The peasants and townsfolk were beside themselves with joy, threw open their houses, and refused to accept payment. But this could not last; the tax on their resources was found everywhere to be too heavy, and the spirit of the trader reasserted its power over the enthusiasm of the saved towards their saviours.

Bargaining began on the one side, and requisitions, though always paid for, on the other. Already the enthusiasm began to die out on the one side as on the other, and soon a new apple of discord was descried lying between the new acquaintances. The Bulgarians had long suffered from the extortion of their Mussulman masters, had seen Pashas grow rich and meaner men fat on the produce of Bulgarian industry. They had looked forward to the entry of the Russians as a period, not only of safety, but of restoration; and they speedily began to take what they considered justice into their own hands. In fact, they began at once to take from every deserted Turkish house the goods which they considered had come directly or indirectly from their own homes. No arguments which I could ever use seemed to have the slightest weight with Bulgarians. To them the taking of Turkish property was not stealing or pillage, but the mere execution of long-determined acts of justice, the restoration of property which they considered stolen. Conceive the monks of the time of Henry VIII. suddenly coming into power again by means of a Spanish invasion, and we may have a fair idea of the feeling of the Bulgarians. But such conduct by no means suited the Russians, who had set themselves the task of winning a name as civilizers in Europe, who were about to show the difference between the free Christian soldier and the "unspeakable" Turk. Hence arose dissensions almost from the first day, and a great difficulty; for the Bulgarians would not be persuaded, and their new friends hesitated to apply force. Not, however, for long. The Cossack whips were brought into play when gross cases of pillage were detected; and the Bulgarians, driven from what they considered their rightful restoration of goods, determined at least to make what they could out of their new and extremely moral masters. If the Russians would not allow Bulgarians to take from Turks, they themselves could not possibly have the face to take from Bulgarians. So the people withheld cattle and corn unless well paid for, and soon gained for themselves a name as ungrateful extortioners. Moreover, they had appealed to the pity of Russia and Europe as a people pillaged and kept poor by the Turk, and their deliverers found them to be far wealthier as to food and drink and lodging than themselves in their own country. The word 'swindle' began to be pretty

freely applied, and there arose a coldness which soon froze to death all the old sympathy. Nor was it long before the Bulgarians began to show an untameable ferocity, little short of that which forms the distinguishing characteristic of their old masters. Their friends may excuse them by saying, 'What can one expect from the pupils in such a school?' But the fact remains that, no matter who taught them, they are barbarous and cruel to the last degree. They claim the virtue of sparing women and children, but it is hard to say what happens when a general massacre is going on.

"I must ask permission to speak with authority on these subjects, as the only Correspondent who saw these things from first to last—from the banks of the Danube to the rose gardens of Roumelia, from the enthusiasm of Sistova, the agony of rejoicing at Tirnova, through the gradual disenchantment and final indignation of the Russians, who not only were merciful themselves, but strove, though with that natural helplessness in organization which characterizes them, to prevent the extortion of the Bulgarians from the Turks, and check their cruelty. Russian policy may have been ever so wrong or selfish, if you please, but is that any reason why honourable English gentlemen should accuse brave men of crimes which they did not commit, and at the sight of which their very souls grew sick? By all means hold the Cabinet at St. Petersburg responsible for having let loose the evils of war and the passions long repressed in a barbarous society; but Englishmen have no more right to accuse the Russian army of cruelty and massacre than to accuse the man who, under superior orders, opens the door and lets out of an asylum a patient who is declared sane, but afterwards shows homicidal mania. The Russian Court and Cabinet are clearly responsible if they do not place the Bulgarians under restraint now that their character is known. May I not go further, and say that all Europe is so responsible? That Turk and Bulgarian cannot live peaceably together in that land, so blessed by nature as to be all but a Paradise, unless restrained by a firm governing hand for a generation at least, is plain upon the face of things; and it would seem as if Russia had neither the power of organization nor sufficient sympathy with either side to perform the task creditably. England could do it if she would; and how the Bulgarians would rejoice in

the rule of a nation which carries in its right hand the gifts of freedom and peace, in its left those of riches, education, and honour!"

Turning now to deal more particularly with the conduct of the Turks during the war, a writer before quoted (Mr. Forbes), after making a most impressive declaration that he regarded the Turks as barbarians, pure and simple, who had neither part nor lot in European civilization, said:—

"I have myself seen great clumps of mutilated Russian dead on battle-fields. I have watched, without the need of a glass, the Bashi-bazouks swarming out after an unsuccessful attack on the part of the Russians, and administering the *coup de grâce* with fell alacrity, under the eyes of the regulars in the shelter trenches. This style of fighting is working its inevitable result on the Russian soldier, who hesitates to face this grim additional casualty of the battle-field; and it is no improbable supposition that the candid premonition of it would have weighed with the Russian authorities on whom would have rested the responsibility of making war in the face of it. But the Turks have tried to blow hot and cold—to profit by their barbarism, and plough with the heifer of civilization. While slaying and sparing not, they have addressed whining, and it may be added lying, appeals to Europe invoking the enactments of the Geneva Convention which they themselves set at nought. Wielding the axe and chopper of ruthless savages, they have acted like a pack of querulous and mendacious old women, in cackling to Europe their trumped-up allegations of violations of civilized warfare on the part of their enemies. They have thus sacrificed the sternly intelligible consistency of an attitude of persistent indomitable barbarism, and have admitted the jurisdiction of a court from whose bar it should have been their policy to stand aloof."

The treatment of the dead and wounded by the Turks was in such flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention, that representations were made to the Porte on the subject by the ambassadors of the various European Powers; but most strongly by Prince Reuss, the German ambassador. The Turkish Minister by no means admitted the truth of the charges, though he at once promised to inquire into the matter and to give the strictest orders to the commanders. The German repre-

sentation was chiefly based on the report of the German Military Attaché who, as described in the previous chapter, was present at the taking of the Shipka Pass by the Russians, when they found their comrades, who had been wounded in the former attack and left there, killed and maimed. The German Government could therefore speak on the authority of its own officer. Not so the other Powers, who, without doubting for one moment the accuracy of the statement, had scarcely the right to speak quite so positively as Germany. As for the Austrian Government, while referring to the statements made on both the Russian and Turkish sides, it declined to give an opinion in favour of either. It only drew the attention of the Porte to the difference which seemed to exist in one respect—namely, that while Turkish prisoners had been taken by the Russians, no Russian prisoners had been heard of as having fallen into the hands of the Turks, from which the inference might be drawn that no quarter was given on the battle-field by the Turks; and this, it was pointed out, was not in accordance with the Geneva Convention. While thus, on the part of Germany, which accepted the report of an eye-witness, the violation of the Geneva Convention was assumed as proved, the Austrian Government, in the absence of such evidence, could only treat the violation as hypothetical.

It was promised that strict injunctions should be forthwith issued to the Turkish commanders to have the enactments of the Geneva Convention respected. On this, however, the curious fact was disclosed that in none of the camps was there a copy in Turkish of that document. It had therefore to be translated before it could be sent to the different subordinate commanders, and, according to Sir H. Havelock, M.P., it would seem very doubtful whether it ever reached some of them at all. In the address, to which we have already referred, he alludes to the battle at Telis on October 28—that is, several months after this order was supposed to have been given—and says he had seen long lines of Russian ambulance carts, 2000 at a time, coming from the scene of action, with both wounded Russians and Turks in them, lying side by side, the latter being received into hospitals and treated with the same care as the former. In connection with the affair at Telis, where horrible barbarities were perpetrated by the Turks on the Russian wounded, he might mention

that he saw in the tent of the Grand-duke Nicholas the Turkish Pasha in command of the force who had committed these enormities. That man, Hakki Pasha, was asked by the Grand-duke why he did not take measures to restrain his troops from committing acts which it would curdle Englishmen's blood to hear of. The Pasha's answer was that his men were entirely out of hand, and could not be controlled. The Pasha was reminded that the Porte had promised to issue strict orders to prevent such atrocities, in deference to the strong protests of the Governments of Austria and Germany. When asked why he had not carried out that order of his Government Hakki Pasha gave the simplest of all answers, which doubtless every other Turkish general would have given—viz., that he had never heard of such an order. Yet, although the Pasha might have been tried and held responsible for the acts of the men under his command, the final question put to him by the Grand-duke was, "Have you a family; and, if so, in what way would you like to communicate with them?"

In the retreat of the Russians to the Balkans and the advance of the Turkish army under Suleiman Pasha, the march of the Turks was accompanied by scenes of slaughter, cruelty, and robbery, which completely put into the shade all that had been laid to the account of their opponents—whether Bulgarians or Russians. The regular Turkish troops were accompanied by large bands of Circassians and Bashi-bazouks, who plundered and murdered the unarmed population without scruple and without restraint—neither age nor sex being spared. The young and middle-aged members of the population had in many instances retired with the Russians, and consequently the Turkish marauders met with but little resistance in their expeditions.

The accounts given by Captain Gambier of some of the incidents of this period, referring to the crimes of the Bulgarians, have already been quoted; and it is therefore only fair that the testimony of the same witness should be given with respect to those of the Turks. The accounts given by this observer were not only marked by the utmost care and impartiality, but in nearly every instance he was corroborated by other independent European witnesses. In one of the earliest of his reports, in a letter dated July 18, and published in the *Times* of the 3rd of August, after describing his visit to the town of Yeni

Saghra, and speaking of the gashed and mutilated bodies of both men and women that he had seen, he continued:—

"Having given in detail what our researches lead to, I must now sum up the evidence which has convinced me that this massacre was a cold-blooded, undeserved attack by the Bashi-Bazouks on the defenceless Bulgarians. To begin with, not one single Turkish corpse has been or apparently can be produced. The account given by a great many Bulgarians who have since come forward is that on Saturday, the 14th, at 3 p.m., a large body of Bashi-bazouks arrived in the town and warned the Moslem population that the Russians were within a short distance. The Moslems then all fled, and it was these people, arriving in Constantinople on Sunday morning, who brought the story that the Russians were driving them out and massacring them. The Bashi-bazouks camped that night outside the town and near the railway station. On Sunday they entered the defenceless town again at mid-day, and began by pillaging the Bazaar. Now the shops of the Bazaar, though in the Turkish quarter, are entirely owned by Bulgarians; and after having ransacked the shops, the Bashi-bazouks set fire to the place. Here, I confess, there is a difficulty. How did the Mosque, on the other side of a broad road, come to be burnt? It is very probable that the Bulgarians did set fire to it, and probably to other parts of the Turkish quarter. But they were all quite unarmed and could offer no resistance. The scene of slaughter and robbery went on for twenty-four hours, beginning with the better classes; and the universal testimony of all the Bulgarians is that the women were violated in nearly every house. The Bashi-bazouks went backwards and forwards to their camp all that day, Sunday, and all that night. The people flying from them into the fields were pursued and killed, in the hope of finding some money on them, and at a place I had not time to visit I am told there are sixteen bodies lying together; but of this I am not certain, though I can see no reason to disbelieve it. . . . To each of these creatures the extreme agonies of human life—death, dishonour, and mortal pain—had been awarded; and what more could they have suffered? . . . On Monday the regular troops arrived from Kazanlik and other places, retreating before the Russians,

and the massacre seems to have ceased. By this time upwards of 4000 people had left by the trains, packed away in every kind of thing that could hold them, most of them having fled from their homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs. When I arrived on Tuesday evening I saw the last two heavy trains leaving, and it was significant that even then the General did not think them safe from these brutal irregulars, as a strong cordon of infantry regulars was posted all along the train until it actually got out of the station. Indeed, so perfectly aware was the General of the peril of these poor people, that he begged the station master to use his utmost endeavours to get them all away, which he did with most praiseworthy promptitude. The General, Selim Pasha, said to the station master, 'For God's sake get these people away, for I cannot answer for my troops.' "

At one place, indeed, a party of the Bashi-bazouks did attempt to murder a number of those helpless fugitives who were being conveyed to Adrianople, and were only prevented by the energetic interference of some Englishmen, who drew their revolvers and stood on the steps of the carriages until the train had started.

In a subsequent letter dated August 3, and published in the *Times* of August 16, the same correspondent said:—

"Yesterday I visited a large Bulgarian village of upwards of 300 houses, that had been sacked, burnt, and the people massacred by the Bashi-bazouks on the 30th of July. The village is called Kara-atli, about sixteen miles from Tirnova, towards Philippopolis. The place is a total wreck, hardly one stone standing on another. It is more completely destroyed than any other I have visited. The people had all fled; so it is difficult to say what became of them, though the account of the survivors seems probable enough. This is, that a great many of them had left before the 30th, and gone to Philippopolis, but about 600 remained, chiefly women and children. They all ran away into the woods and fields on the approach of the Bashi-bazouks, and many were caught and slaughtered at once, and others are roaming about until a similar fate overtake them. Of the few corpses I saw, the most shocking was a woman with her head half hacked off, her clothes all torn away at the waist, and the body half burnt. Dogs and pigs were devouring the bodies, while don-

keys and cattle strayed through the roads ownerless. The school had not been burnt, and had evidently been the scene of a terrible fray. Blood on the floors and doorposts, and all kinds of household gear, school-books, and other things in the greatest confusion, told the same dreadful tale. The spelling-books and childish copy-books appealed powerfully to every human instinct within one. This affair of Kara-atli, however, sinks into insignificance before the appalling horror of the massacre at Geula-Mahalissé. It appears that on the 26th a strong force, under Raouf Pasha, made a reconnaissance from Yeni Saghra, and spent a night near the village above named. After the force had left, a large body of Circassians returned to the village, and in the first place carried off an immensenumber of young girls, whose fate can only be guessed at. They then returned to the village, and found that the remainder of the women and children had fled for protection to the church. There they slaughtered them all, and from that church Colonel Lennox and Lieutenant Chermiside, R.E., military attachés, and Messrs. Leslie and Meyrick, of the Aid to the Sick and Wounded Society, brought out and buried 175 bodies of women and children. Besides these there were many others killed in different places about the village, and 36 wounded had their wounds dressed by the above-named medical officers. These eye-witnesses describe the scene in the church as something indescribably awful. The dead and the dying were piled in suffocating heaps, little children crawling about looking for their mothers, wounded mothers trying to move those ghastly heaps to find their children, and when found hardly able to recognise them with the fearful sword cuts about their little heads. Many women had been violated and subjected to fearful barbarities, pregnant women ripped open, while others had had their breasts cut off or their hands chopped off at the wrist. A mother lay stone dead, and her baby was vainly endeavouring to get the food for which it was starving, while an older child was calling and pushing the dead woman to try and make her awake. Even while these gentlemen were in the village the murdering was going on at another part, and so threatening were these ferocious ruffians that their lives stood in very great danger. A Circassian from behind a hedge took a deliberate shot at Mr. Meyrick, but missed him."

Similar accounts to the above were given of

massacres at numerous other places in the neighbourhood, both towns and villages, some affording evidence of even greater barbarity. Thus, Mr. Rose, correspondent of the *Scotsman*, writing from Dalboka in a letter dated August 1, gave the following ghastly particulars. He says:—

“I came upon a house, the walls still intact, but with some of the woodwork still smouldering. Such scenes, alas! had during the past ten days been but too common, and I would have passed it by unheeded but that a sickening stench excited my curiosity, and I peeped in at what had been the door. It is no exaggeration to say that what little hair I had left on my head rose with revolting terror at the awful sight presented to me. The shell of the house inclosed a mass of burned Bulgarians! Swollen, blackened corpses on a battle-field, mutilated trunks, impaled babies, crucified women, females cut open—all I had seen; yet none possessed half the terrible horror of this ghastly commingling of charred skeletons and half-consumed bodies. Only part of them were exposed, for the roof had fallen in on the south side and covered more than half the floor space; but in the heap nearest the door I counted the remains of thirty-three human beings, besides the disconnected limbs of many more. They were of all ages and of both sexes. On the day before, at the capture of Yeni Saghra, the Turks in the town had risen upon the Bulgarians and driven them into houses selected for the purpose, locked them in, surrounded the houses, set fire to them, and made of the Bulgarian wretches a burnt offering to their vengeance. Here near the door was the blackened corpse of a man who had tried to force the door while the flames were circling overhead; but he had been shot in the chest, as could be seen from the bullet hole in the charred flesh. There was a skeleton, the vertebræ of which had literally curled up; another was doubled up with the most expressive contortions; a fourth, apparently that of a woman, had in agony clasped the neck of a fifth at its side. Over against this heap were several with the bones of the legs drawn up, the skull thrown back, and grinning fleshless in the most ghastly manner. The remains of youths and babes were also there, legs and arms twisted and bent past resemblance to human form; while limbs and skulls strewn here and there showed that the hacked bodies of the dead had been thrown into that terrible furnace with the living!

Further up the village was another hideous pile; but words fail me, and the heart turns sick at the very remembrance of it. Here I counted the remains of twenty-seven human beings.”

It would be easy to multiply indefinitely accounts similar to the foregoing, to show the awful suffering brought upon the population south of the Balkans at this period of the war. Captain Gambier, summing up what he had seen, said:—

“In most countries the sympathies of those present when wars are going on are drawn to the soldiery, and we picture to ourselves, when we have not seen the probably more horrible reality, a field of dead and dying, a starving or fever-stricken army. But here the horrors of war, since the Russians crossed the Danube, have, with one or two solitary exceptions, been borne by the rural population, by the helpless old men, the women, and children. The young and the strong of the men, Bulgarians and Turks, have both found safety in joining, the Bulgarians the Russian army, the Turks in becoming Bashi-bazouks. Both sets have formed themselves into vast bands of merciless executioners, and under the protection of their respective armies pillage, murder, ravish, and destroy, whatever comes in their way belonging to the other race or creed. From any hill-top the fires of ten or a dozen burning villages can be counted, while every road is crowded with fugitives flying they know not whither, and their lives absolutely depending on this or that move of the opposing armies. I have seen a large valley blocked up by hundreds of Moslem fugitives, resting in supposed safety near a Turkish army. I have heard soon after of some change of position of that army, and knew that it must have been physically impossible for those unfortunate people to escape the murdering Bulgarians, who are ever ready to pounce on the defenceless and wreak on them their long pent-up vengeance. Again, on the other hand, I have had ocular demonstration of the sacking and massacre of a large Bulgarian town, and needed only time to have discovered more abundant proofs. I hear on every side the same story—Turks murdered and defiled by Christians, and Christians by Turks. I pass through villages actually by the hundred where nothing remains alive but the dogs and poultry, and where every house alike, Turk or Christian, has in its turn been ransacked. In the fields the most bounteous crop that Providence

has given—partly, perhaps, to heal the sores of last year, if men would allow it to be so—lies rotting on the ground, while far and near the husbandman has disappeared, his cattle scattered, his stacks of winter fodder a charred heap, and his cottage a ruin; his wife and children, if God has been merciful to them, dead, and their dishonour forgotten, or lost in some mountain forest, where they pass their trembling hours in terror and starvation. As to isolated cases of cruelty and barbarity, it is impossible to record them, so innumerable are they and so irrefutable is the evidence.”

Another correspondent of the *Times* who went over the same ground in company with two Englishmen, who were engaged in the administration of relief, thus described his journey:—

“All the way from Shipka to Yeni Saghra, at which place we took the rail, the air is polluted with the remains of the killed. The bodies of men, women, and children are to be met with in all stages of decomposition at the roadsides, in the cornfields and gardens, on the banks of streams, and in the beds of rivulets. Some hundreds were choking the shallow river within a quarter of a mile from where we camped at Yeni Saghra. Desolation and ruin appeared along the whole way. The remains of formerly prosperous villages, which it was impossible to pitch tent even near, rippling mountain streams in which our horses refused to drink, the howling of wolves around us at night, brought down from the mountains earlier than usual by the horrid feasts prepared for them (the largest I have ever seen lay dead, evidently recently shot, by the side of the road not far from Yeni Saghra), and worse, the occasional shrieks from human beings, followed by solitary rifle reports, which made one shudder more than the damp night air—all these sights and sounds went to form one great horrible phantasmagoria, which none of us are likely to live long enough to remember without pain.”

Similar evidence was given by Mr. Fawcett, one of the English consuls, who visited the districts affected by the war south of the Balkans. In a report to Mr. Layard, the English ambassador at Constantinople, he said that the war had probably caused more human misery than even the invasion of the Visigoths, who fourteen centuries before desolated those same fertile countries. From Sopot to Yeni Saghra, a distance of 150

miles, the country, as far as the towns went, and he used the word advisedly, was a desert, although it is a country almost unequalled in Europe for fertility. It lies between the Great and Lesser Balkans, and is, in fact, one great garden. The towns are nearly all built on the débris of what centuries have brought down from the mountains, which form healthy undulating slopes, all of which are abundantly watered by clear streams coming out of the limestone; groves of walnut and plum trees surround these once happy villages, while below extends the vast valley of the Tunja, rich in corn, maize, and tobacco. In addition, all these places were enriched by a peculiar local industry, namely, the manufacture of “shyak,” or native woollen cloth, which brought a large return to the district, and which was carried on principally by water-power. All this was now changed: from Sopot, with the exception of Karlovo, which had only been sacked, all the towns, Kalofer, Kazanlik, Mujlis, Ufanlis, Haïnkioi, Yeni Mahallé, &c., down to Yeni Saghra, were smoking ruins, the population massacred or fled, and only a few starving wretches left, cowering in what were once their homes.

When the Russians arrived they disarmed the Turkish population and gave their weapons to their Bulgarian neighbours, who, he had been informed, afterwards fell on their Turkish neighbours and massacred them. From minute inquiries he had made on the spot, he was inclined to think that an organized band of Bulgarians from the other side of the Balkans, carrying a sort of badge or uniform, accompanied the Russian column; and that when the Russians retired it was this corps (calling themselves “Vengeurs”) who commenced the fiendish work. Suleiman Pasha’s army once arrived and the Russians in retreat, the turn of the others came, and Circassians and Bashi-bazouks rivalled each other in horrible reprisals. He had seen with his own eyes several badges, hats, and bridles, which were worn by this corps of “Vengeurs.” He had also been told by both parties, Turk and Bulgarian alike—“We were happy; we had forgotten the past year; the troubles had not reached us. We knew but little of insurrectionary committees, or even of the war, when suddenly this awful calamity, without warning, fell upon us.” It was further to be remarked that the country was depopulated. The rich harvests were wasting for want of workers;

those which had been got in had been mostly burned out of mere wantonness. The Bulgarian men who had not fallen under the vengeance of the Turks were in the Balkans with the Russians. The Turks who had escaped had all fled south.

While the reality and extent of this outburst of fury were universally admitted, the question as to who was chiefly responsible for it was for a time hotly debated. In a despatch from the English ambassador at Constantinople to Lord Derby, dated August 15, 1877, and published in the "Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Turkey," No. 1 (1878), Mr. Layard said—

"The Porte is now condemned by those who last year employed the exaggerated, and in many cases unfounded, reports against it, and thereby have been partly the cause of the terrible calamities now befalling Turkey, for making use of the same means to influence public opinion. It feels and resents what it considers a great injustice. The Mahometans believe that the way in which outrages and massacres committed by the Russians and Bulgarians are explained away, attenuated, or justified by certain parties in England, proves that this war is not waged, as it is pretended, in the cause of humanity, but in the spirit of religious hatred and persecution. It is astonishing how deep this conviction has penetrated, even among the lower orders of the Mussulman population. It accounts for a great deal of the exasperation at present felt against Christians and Europeans.

"I have no doubt that many of the statements as to massacres and outrages attributed to Russians, Bulgarians, and Turks, are very much exaggerated. The difficulty of getting at the truth is very great. I have endeavoured to obtain, through her Majesty's consuls and the military attachés to the Embassy, the best and most trustworthy evidence on a subject which so deeply interests the British public. Their reports prove beyond a doubt that massacres of the Mussulman population have taken place on a large scale, and that in many places they were committed by Russian cavalry, or by Bulgarians with the connivance or under the protection of Russian troops.

"The reports from the military attachés confirm those of the consular agents. Captain Fife saw himself proofs of the horrible deaths inflicted by Russians or Bulgarians upon Mussulman women and children. On the other hand, Colonel Lennox

describes, from personal examination, the shocking massacre of Christian men, women, and children by Circassians in the village of Geula-Mahal-lissé, and states that in other places these lawless plunderers have committed great excesses.

"There cannot be a doubt that to the Bulgarians must be attributed some of the most cruel and horrible outrages that have been committed. Upon them, consequently, has fallen a terrible revenge.

"That horrible acts of revenge and retaliation have been committed there cannot be a question. In no country of the world, amongst no other races, could it have been otherwise. The annals of history need not to be searched far to show this; but it is but right to put on record, in justice to the Sultan and the Turkish authorities, that they have done their utmost to repress this spirit of revenge, and with success. Hitherto, neither the Turkish regular soldiers nor the true Turkish population have been guilty, except in rare instances, of outrages upon Christians. On the contrary, it is generally admitted that they have protected and shown kindness to them, and have saved the lives of a vast number of women and children. As yet there appears to have been no massacre of Christians which can be attributed to animosities of race or religion. The evil deeds that have been committed are assigned by all trustworthy authorities to the Circassians and Bashi-bazouks. As these lawless irregulars are in the service of the Turkish Government, it will, of course, be held responsible for their acts; but it must not be forgotten, at the same time, that Turkey has been forced into this struggle for existence, and that she has been compelled to have recourse to every available means to defend all that is dear to men—honour, country, religion, and life.

"In addition to the sacrifice of innocent human life caused by this war, the devastation of some of the fairest provinces of Turkey in Europe render it still more cruel. No such war of massacre and desolation has been carried on for centuries. It will leave behind it animosities which can never be removed, and a spirit of revenge which nothing will quench. Flourishing provinces have been reduced to a desert, and populations of different races and creeds, which have hitherto lived in peace with each other, have been taught the lesson of mutual extermination. All the accumu-

lated evils and vices of centuries of Turkish misrule have not produced such results as these. It may be stated with some confidence that no war of modern times has produced so much misery and desolation. I will venture to add, that no people have borne with more resignation the calamities and sacrifices that such a war has brought upon them than the Turkish population. This fact is admitted by those who can be the least suspected of any sympathy for the Turkish cause. It can be verified any day by the sight of the thousands upon thousands of men of all ages who have been brought from their distant homes to fight for their Sultan, their religion, and their country, under conditions of want and privation to which few other soldiers in the world could submit."

So far as the Russian regular troops were concerned (if we except the charges against the Cossack cavalry), their freedom from any participation in the horrible proceedings we have described is generally allowed. More than this, it was admitted by the Turkish population that the Russians did all that they could to maintain order, and indeed many of the Turkish families sought shelter with the Russian columns. The same, however, cannot be said for some of the Russian "allies." In his advance General Gourko had counted on the assistance of the inhabitants. He was seriously deceived on this point. The formation of the Bulgarian legion had given rise to the greatest hopes. From seeing active and resolute men to whom a few weeks' drill were sufficient training for the military profession, arrive from Roumania and Servia, it was concluded that nothing would be more easy than to form an entire Bulgarian army around his nucleus. This impression proved to be false, because the volunteers who had flocked to the Russian standard were emigrants whose *morale* had been raised out of Turkey by the enjoyment of liberty; but the Bulgarians of Bulgaria, dull and debased by oppression, showed themselves incapable of playing the *rôle* demanded of them. It had been thought possible to make soldiers and scouts of the insurgents. When General Gourko had distributed arms amongst them, he saw the Bulgarians who had accepted them revolt, as he had expected, but only to attack the Mussulman population, to massacre the inoffensive inhabitants, and to contribute the same title which the Bashi-bazouks gave to the war—that character of savage brutality which

made all Europe shudder. The most intelligent observers said, "It is an error to imagine that the Turk and the Bulgarian can live any longer side by side; the one must exterminate the other."

The desertion of the inhabitants of the valleys of the Tunja and Maritza to the mercy of Turks, enraged by their complicity with the Russians, was a step that could only be justified by the direst necessity. Indeed, if the Russians felt themselves to be deceived regarding the Bulgarians, the latter had equal reason to complain of them. After having incited the Bulgarian inhabitants to a most hazardous insurrection, the Russians were scarcely able to do anything to protect them against the reprisals of the conqueror. The sudden apparition of General Gourko's corps had misled the unhappy people; they were incited to rebellion, arms were distributed to them, and at the moment of revenge no one was there to save them. The Russians had commenced hostilities to save the Bulgarians; and by the irony of fate, the plainest result of their march over the Balkans was to decimate the Bulgarian population.

The defeat of the Bulgarian Legion, which formed the third column of the army of General Gourko, and which had occupied the town of Eski Saghra, has already been described; the events which followed this defeat it is impossible to pass over.

The unfortunate inhabitants of Eski Saghra, on seeing the Russian and Bulgarian troops fly towards Kazanlik, leaving them to the reprisals of the Turks, attempted to follow; but they were driven back into the town by Redjib's soldiers, who had completely invested the northern side. They then re-entered their houses; but knowing the fate which awaited them, and strengthened with the energy of despair, they barricaded themselves in, determining at least to sell their lives dearly. The resistance was vain, and only gave a shadow of pretext to the massacre which followed. A few cannon shots very soon demolished their poor mud-built houses; they took fire like straw, and the Bulgarians who escaped into the street to avoid the flames were immediately cut in pieces. The hospital presented more resistance; 100 Christians had shut themselves up there. For an hour they succeeded in repulsing the attacks of 1000 Turks; then, decimated and vanquished, they offered to surrender to the Mussulmans if their lives were promised them. Whilst

they were parleying at the door they were forced back inside by a violent rush; the Turks swarmed in, and the massacre commenced, at the same time that another was going on in the church in which the women and children had been placed, in the hope that that at least would be a safe refuge. Suleiman Pasha himself stated in his reports that 1800 inhabitants were killed.

The principal Turks, who on the arrival of the Russians had gone to join the Bashi-bazouks in the neighbouring villages, guided the soldiers in their pursuit through the narrow streets, pointing out where the Bulgarians most suspected of rebellion, and especially those who were richest, resided.

A German writer, well known for his antipathy to Russia, and not likely therefore to exaggerate the crimes of their adversaries, Herr Wickède, who was present at the sack of the town, wrote to the *Augsburger Zeitung* as follows:—

“I could feel legitimate pleasure at this victory, which saved Adrianople, were it not that what I was obliged to see and hear afterwards, unfortunately, very soon destroyed my joy.

“On the entry of the Turks into Eski Saghra they were met here and there by shots fired from the windows, either by some Russian soldiers left behind, and who wished to sell their lives dearly, or by some Bulgarians driven to desperation. The Turks, already inflamed with warlike and fanatical ardour, only became more enraged. Suleiman Pasha's troops had just come from fighting in Montenegro, where but little attention is paid to discretion and humanity, and those of Raouf Pasha had been witnesses of the misdeeds of the Bulgarians—the profanation of the mosques, &c., in the valley of the Tunja; the result of their exasperation was scenes of which, unfortunately, I was obliged to be, at least in part, an eye-witness, the very remembrance of which still makes my blood curdle in my veins, so that it is impossible to describe them in all their horror.

“They were not men; it was a legion of infuriated fiends which was let loose on the unhappy town of Eski Saghra. It was not only that no prisoners were made, and that all who did not fall pierced with bayonet wounds were butchered by the yataghan; the greater number of the wounded had their heads cut off. The sick, women, children, and old men—every one living and breathing—were pitilessly massacred or thrown

into the flames of the burning houses. It was more especially the Bashi-bazouks of Albania, who had come with Suleiman Pasha, who were worse than fiends, and who slaughtered without the least object or discretion—out of pure love of massacring. The officers—if one may be allowed to speak of officers when referring to the Albanians or any other irregular troops of the Sultan—had lost all authority, and allowed the soldiers to satiate their rage. The fate of Magdeburg during the Thirty Years' War cannot have been more horrible than that of Eski Saghra and a number of other places to the south of the Balkans; and the most sanguinary hordes of that age could not have massacred, burnt, and pillaged with fiercer rage than has been done here every day and is still being done at this town.”

Herr Wickède added in conclusion:—“Two years ago, in the month of May, I made the journey from Kazanlik to Yeni Saghra. Plantations of roses exhaled odours which rendered the air almost too fragrant. Thousands of nightingales were singing in the thickets. Hard-working Bulgarian girls, all suitably attired, were driving before them to Kazanlik asses laden with large panniers full of rose leaves. Gladness reigned everywhere. One might here have believed himself in a terrestrial paradise—if anywhere in the world. And now, great God, what a contrast!

“The rose-bushes have nearly all been cut down to feed the bivouac fires. Instead of red roses, red pools of human blood are seen on the trampled grass. Instead of the perfume of roses, the atmosphere is tainted with pestilential miasmas rising from thousands and thousands of putrefying bodies of men and animals. Instead of nightingales, there are vultures, which alight in large flocks on a prey, alas! but too abundant. The pretty and industrious Bulgarian girls of yore, who at their work used to sing joyous songs, are replaced now by hideous Bashi-bazouks in tatters, who wander here and there on their bony nags, more resembling devils than men, and who butcher and burn mercilessly and indiscriminately.

“Some days ago I made an excursion on horseback to a place two leagues from Eski Saghra. I saw eleven villages which had been burnt and completely sacked. I saw sixty-four corpses of men and women, completely naked and rotting in the fields bordering on the road. And how many are there which I did not observe? Certainly,

my nerves are not weak; as an officer I went through the Crimean War and all the sanguinary contest in India; as a correspondent I witnessed the French Campaign of 1870-71—but all I now see here is more than I could have conceived possible."

It is difficult to estimate the total number of Bulgarians who were slaughtered, but the British consul at Philippopolis was informed by a Greek physician who was sent by the Turkish authorities to Eski Saghra to bury the dead, that he employed for the work about 300 men, and that they buried between 5000 and 6000 bodies—for the most part those of Bulgarians—in the town alone. The thoroughness with which the work of extermination was carried out, may be judged from the fact that out of 3000 fugitives who arrived at Philippopolis, the agent of the Armenian Bible House of Stamboul, who was in the city, found that there was only one male child above the age of ten years, and he had escaped through his having been dressed in girl's clothing. It was confidently reported at the time that the wholesale massacre was planned and carried out in obedience to orders received from Constantinople, but there is no trustworthy evidence in support of this statement. That the massacre was, however, a deliberate one it is impossible to doubt; and it is sufficient of itself to justify the conclusion, that admitting all that has been accepted of the conduct of the Bulgarians, their excesses were enormously outnumbered by those committed by the Turks, and that for this the Turkish Government was to a very great extent responsible.

While the Bashi-bazouks, with the detachments which re-occupied the valleys of the Maritza and Tunja as the Russians evacuated them, left such bloody traces through the whole country, eye-witnesses agreed in stating that the Turkish regular army generally conducted itself well. "These regular soldiers, which composed an effective of 40,000 to 50,000 men," said the correspondent of the *Temps* to whom we have already referred, "have for clothes only ragged old uniforms, for boots they have stripes of stuff and small pieces of leather; for food biscuit, sometimes rice and water. The sun is hot, the halting-places are far apart, but it seems to matter little. These poor fellows have fought in the west; they come with light hearts to fight their traditional foe in the east of Turkey in Europe; they are come to

fight; what does the cold or the rain of the mountains, the heat or the dryness of the plains, matter to them? they march without complaining, go where they are ordered, and die hoping for a better fate—the paradise of Mahomet."

But if the regular army did not pillage, and if it only massacred occasionally in the heat of action, as at Eski Saghra, it is impossible to regard the Turkish authorities as being free from the guilt of the excesses committed. In attendance upon the regular troops which were ordered to the front under Suleiman Pasha were large numbers of irregulars, consisting of Circassians, Zeibecks, and Bashi-bazouks. These men were found to be of scarcely any use for military purposes, as they were altogether regardless of discipline, treating the officers placed over them with contempt, and defying any interference on the part of the regular troops. By these men, who travelled about in bands in the neighbourhood of the regular army, the country was ravaged, plundered, and burnt, with every accompaniment of cruelty, lust, and murder. The Turkish officers, from the generals downward, alleged that they were totally unable to restrain or control these men, or to punish them when their guilt was proved.

In a letter to Mr. Layard, dated 8th September, 1877, and published in the Blue Book on Turkey issued in 1878, Colonel Lennox said, "The question of the Circassians and of the Bashi-bazouks was becoming one of serious importance. People in Europe would consider that they were enrolled as irregular troops, whereas really they did not appear (with a few exceptions) to be enrolled at all. The Circassians came when they chose, and perhaps took some part in a battle, but they only thought of the spoil, and rode off with it to their homes as soon as possible; if ammunition waggons were taken, they carried off the horses, and thus made it sometimes difficult to remove those trophies of war. The foot Bashi-bazouks appeared on the scene after a battle and took no part whatever in the fighting; but when it was over they stripped the dead, took away their arms, military and other clothing, and he feared very often mangled the dead, and even killed the wounded."

Another English officer, whose letter to Mr. Layard is also published in the same Blue Book, said, "The Bashi-bazouks and also the Circassians have done infinite harm to the Turkish cause, and incidentally have hindered desertion among the

Russians. The Bashi-bazouks are under no control. I was told by a Colonel on the Staff, a man of European education, and I believe an aide-de-camp to the Sultan, that he had himself seen the Bashi-bazouks dig up Turkish dead to rob the bodies, and he thought them capable of killing even Turks to do so. To the question why they were not punished with death, he replied that such punishment, though recognized as a military one, was contrary to religion, and they could not venture to enforce it. I have seen these Bashi-bazouks hanging about every action; and being often the first on the field when danger is past, they capture the few prisoners who are left behind, or take charge of them from the regulars, in which case they constantly murder them. I have myself seen them searching the bodies of Turkish dead to collect ammunition and arms.

"In speaking of Bashi-bazouks, it should be borne in mind that there are two classes—the armed peasants, who stay near their own villages, and the professional camp followers. The latter are those who do most injury, and add the burning of churches and the wrecking of railway stations to their other offences. Under Mehemet Ali an effort was made to stop their excesses by ordering all of them to the rear, and by flogging those caught looting; but means were wanting for enforcing this at all effectually."

Mr. Layard repeatedly brought the subject of the excesses committed by the Circassians and Bashi-bazouks upon the Christian population under the notice of the Grand Vizir, stating that the accounts which reached him from official as well as other sources of undoubted authority, showed that these miscreants plundered, burnt, and massacred in all directions with almost entire impunity, and that the Turkish military and other authorities seemed unable or unwilling to punish or control them. Mr. Layard represented in the strongest terms the painful impression that they had made in Europe, and the grave injury they were doing to the cause of Turkey. He also urged that measures should be taken to put a stop to them at any cost.

The Grand Vizir did not attempt to deny that the Circassians had been guilty of great outrages; but he endeavoured to show that the responsibility for them could not fall upon the Porte. Russia had forced the war upon Turkey by an unprovoked aggression. The Turkish Government was

in want of cavalry to meet the Cossacks, who were devastating the country and committing great cruelties upon the Mussulman inhabitants. It was therefore obliged to have recourse to the Circassians as auxiliary irregular horsemen. Every one knew that they were a wild and lawless tribe; but could the Porte be expected to abandon one of its principal means of defence against an unscrupulous enemy? He promised, however, to take measures to restrain and discipline them.

In a conversation with Mehemet Ali, on October 18, after his removal from the command of the Turkish army of the Danube, Mr. Layard "questioned him as to the reports that the Russian wounded were murdered on the field of battle, and that no prisoners were taken or quarter given by the Turkish troops. He emphatically declared that these reports were untrue. He said that it was true that but few prisoners were taken, because the Russians either refused to give themselves up (as they had been induced to believe that, if they fell into the hands of the Turks, they would be barbarously mutilated and tortured), or they managed to run away and escape. Such prisoners as had been made had been kindly treated, and he had given the strictest orders to his troops, which he believed had been obeyed, that no outrages should be committed upon the wounded or the dead. The Turkish soldiers were incapable of such acts of barbarity as had been attributed to them. But he grieved to have to admit, he said, that the so-called Bashi-bazouks had been guilty of the most shocking outrages and cruelty. Those who passed under this name were not all irregulars in the actual service of the Porte. The army was followed by a large number of men who had fled from their villages, which had been devastated by the Russians and Bulgarians, and whose wives and children were wandering over the country in the utmost misery. They were naturally exasperated against the invaders of their country, and revenged themselves upon the unfortunate wounded Russians whom they might find on the field of battle. He did not deny that the irregulars had also committed cruelties and excesses, but he said that it was most difficult to keep them under control. He had done his utmost to do so, and had hung a number of them as a warning to the rest. He was now endeavouring to prevail upon the Porte to form a military police to accompany the armies. But unfortun-

ately men and money were wanted for the purpose."

When a Turkish column was on its way, the irregular cavalry who advanced before it fell like a cursed plague on the country which it was going to travel through, and the regular infantry, without taking part in the excesses committed, marched literally in the midst of fire and blood. On the 27th of July there were seen from Lisakeui, a village in the neighbourhood of Karlova, some Bashi-bazouks and some Turkish regulars who were returning from Philippopolis to Karlova. The Bashi-bazouks, who preceded the regular troops, massacred all the Christians who had the misfortune to fall into their hands. The Christians in these districts, and those in the environs of Philippopolis, seized with panic, fled in crowds towards Karlova; but those only arrived there who had the good luck not to meet the Bashi-bazouks. On the 30th July these savages, followed by Circassians, entered Karlova, and immediately organized there in concert a general massacre of the Christians, which was followed by pillage. The number of victims massacred in these days cannot be estimated at less than 1000, of whom 500 were buried on the 1st and 2nd August. Not a single Turk was found amongst the victims, which affords a striking proof that the Christians offered no resistance.

After these frightful scenes some Turkish regular troops entered the town, ostensibly in order to prevent massacre and pillage. On the advice of the military governor, all the Mahometan families were sent away from Karlova the same evening, and taken through Lisakeui to Philippopolis under military escort. On the 31st July the Turkish troops set out for the camp established near Karlova, and remained there four days. On the 3rd August Mahmoud Bey, the commander of the camp and the commander of the detachment defeated at Shipka by the Russians, re-entered Karlova with two battalions of Nizams and about 800 Circassian cavalry. The arrival of the latter was the signal for the renewal of the terrible scenes of 30th July. All who escaped the first massacre fell pitilessly under the blows of the Circassians, who penetrated into the houses and carried away all who remained after the catastrophe of July 30. The commandant of the Turkish regulars attempted, it is true, to hold back the Circassians, but it was not done with

the necessary energy; and these bandits were allowed to leave Karlova after having killed and pillaged in every direction. The flourishing towns of Kalofer and Sopot were treated in the same way as Karlova. The following report, written by a correspondent of the *Times* who accompanied a relieving party, will give the best idea of the scene more than five weeks afterwards:—

"RELIEF CAMP, KARLOVA, *September 5.*

"The experience of the last two days has been by common consent the most painful in the lives of the four Englishmen who are here. In my last, I think, I put the former population of this beautiful and wealthy town at 10,000. Careful inquiries made since have convinced us that 20,000 here and 9000 or 10,000 at Sopot would be a far more accurate computation. At present, beyond a few score soldiers and a dozen or so Bulgarian men, who are doubtless hiding in different houses, the living souls are some 5000 or 6000 women and children, who are either inhabitants or have fled here for shelter from Sopot and Kalofer, where the massacres and pillaging have, as you are aware, been rather more complete. Of all these helpless creatures, not a dozen are desperate enough to leave their empty houses, except to run here in weeping groups, beseeching us for that protection which it makes the blood boil to be powerless to give. Anything like the White Terror here can scarcely have existed since the French Revolution. In other places the Bashi-bazouks and Circassians have come and gone like a blasting sandstorm, and the living have raised their heads upon their departure. Here, for nearly six agonizing weeks, they have come and gone at their own hellish will, and their hapless quarry have been cooped up like fowls awaiting their inevitable turn.

"Mr. Fawcett, Colonel Blunt, Mr. Master, and I, have between us entered some hundreds of substantially-built houses crowded with terrified women and children, and in no single house was there a scrap of movable property to be discovered, nor a rag, except those which had been half torn from the wearers' backs. Also, not a woman was there who had not had to fly more than once in mortal terror before ruffians who, under the pretence of searching for men, either perpetrated or attempted nameless outrages. It was perfectly heartbreaking to witness the signs of hunger and fear. Then you can imagine the sickening feeling

with which we lie night after night listening to the shrieks of women coming from various quarters of the town. Picture to yourself, if you can, the sufferings of these poor things without light—there is not a gill of oil or a candle out of the guardhouses here—with empty stomachs and sick hearts, for the news of the hangings at Philippopolis have somehow reached this place. And there is abundant evidence that all these people were two months ago what we call well-to-do. Theirs is no case of wretched beings inured to misery and hardened by perpetual want. There is not a rookery or a home of squalor in the town. Every building stands in what was a short time ago a well-kept garden, and possesses even still innumerable evidences of former "comfort." Karlova must have been in happy times a little paradise, and Sopot was another: situated in Cumberland-like scenery, with little artificial canals diverted from the mountain streams running through each plot, where every sort of flower and vegetable known in temperate climes flourished in glorious profusion. The ample pasturage produces the best meat and milk in Turkey. The wild flowers everywhere provide enormous quantities of honey. The profitable manufacture of the native cloth had brought general pecuniary prosperity, and the result was that, in the opinion of four old travellers, Karlova and its neighbourhood was the one place in which, always excepting his own dear home, each would have liked to live.

"But what has the ruthlessness of armed ruffianism brought this to? We are camped in what appears to have been a large kitchen garden. Tomatoes, French beans, vegetable marrows three feet and four feet long, cucumbers, Indian corn, grapes, apples, pears, plums, walnuts, aubergines, are to be had for the gathering. The owner and planter of these is probably hung, for he was evidently a respectable man. On the left of our encampment is a rapid-running watercourse, in which we got a morning bath. Stepping across this, and entering a wrenched-open garden door, we came upon what was the principal cloth factory. Like every other house, it is a complete wreck—proprietor hung at Philippopolis. But the more solid and substantial cloth-making machinery, driven by a water-wheel, has resisted the destroyers, and stands mockingly motionless, while the widow and four children, emboldened by our presence, creep in every morning, covered

with rags, to carry away the garden stuff to keep their attenuated bodies together. We have variously estimated the capital of the late enterprising proprietor at from £10,000 to £20,000. Like most Bulgarians, he seems to have been a pious man, for in his country house, among the other *débris*, lies a New Testament, torn in half. Bordering us on the right are some half-dozen empty houses, from which we have "looted" for camp use an old broken table, a stool, and four wooden chairs, which were literally all the effects not broken or torn to shreds. One of them was a very superior building, and yesterday evening three women and several little girls asked our permission (!) to enter this, their former home, to take some grapes and vegetables from their own garden. The mother of the children, a stately, composedly-speaking woman, implored us to say if it was true that a great many respectable Bulgarians had been executed at Philippopolis, and if we had heard anything of her husband, who had been arrested and sent there. We held out false hopes, I am afraid, by assuring her that the Pasha declared he was only hanging wicked men; that reports of horrors were always exaggerated, and she should hope for the best, &c. But the still desolation, heartrending as it is, was completely driven from our minds when we encountered the weeping and groaning misery of some 2000 poor souls whom we relieved from the pangs of acute hunger in our rounds through the town. At first, as our arabas halted under their carefully-boarded windows, with Englishmen standing in them, their sleeves turned up, and their clothing all white with flour, the poor things were afraid to open their doors. Soon, however, hunger-driven old women came trembling to a quickly-opened side door, and, with a nervous glance up and down the street, held up their aprons, and in many cases slipped off their petticoats, to receive the shower of rice and flour from our pans. Each, according to the number of souls in the house, received about a fortnight's supply. All wept bitterly, and invoked all the different blessings they could think of upon our heads. By degrees, finding nothing terrible happening, confidence came, and our waggons were surrounded by crowds of famished-looking women and children, of all ages, pushing and struggling to get near, in the vain endeavour to be served first. Women in the background held up their hastily-

constructed bags and their children, and, with imploring looks and prayers, begged not to be left out.

"From morning to night this has gone on for two days, and still not half the people have been approached. To see the despair each evening at dusk as we had to desist was dreadful, but, with every desire to do our best, we have to husband our strength, for already the hot sun and bad smells of the fever-stricken houses are telling on us. We are obliged to keep a careful look out all night, as the Bashi-bazouks have made no secret of their objection to our presence, and the authorities are becoming decidedly cool, although it was at their express desire that we gave aid to the Bulgarians."

All the places in the neighbourhood of Eski Saghra were burnt, as Herr Wickède reported, and the Christians who were shut in there perished in the flames; 3000 women and children of these districts were led away to Philippopolis and Adrianople. Among the number were found only three old men. In the district of Schirpan, where the population was occupied with the harvest, the Caimakan, Saïd Aga, known previously for his acts of violence to the Christians, patrolled at the head of Turkish troops, who slaughtered all those who fell into their hands. This district of Schirpan was one of the richest of that part of the country. It contained a very large proportion of Christians, and more than thirty churches and 500 schools and colleges, which were all burnt; in fact, the work of destruction extended as far as the villages of Bogdan, Mahalesi, Kauï-Mahalesi, and many others, containing from 150 to 200 families. These villages are on the railway between Yeni Saghra and Hirmanlai, and scarcely fifty persons escaped from them alive.

The madness of the first few days being over, an appearance of legality was given to these wholesale executions by preceding them with an examination, and a sentence pronounced by a Council of War. A very characteristic trait, related by a merchant of Adrianople, will show with what sincerity this judicial comedy was played. On the breast of each person hanged was placed a ticket indicating his crime and the judgment which had followed it. One day as they were taking down the bodies of the victims, the zaptiehs carefully collected all the tickets. The merchant in question asked a zaptieh why they were collecting these tickets,

which could not be of any use again. The zaptieh answered, "Others are going to be hanged, and the tickets will be attached to their breasts; do you think that fresh ones are manufactured each time? A Bulgarian is a Bulgarian, and whether he has committed such and such a crime matters little; he always deserves to be hanged." As, according to the Mussulman law, the evidence of two believers is sufficient to convict an infidel, and as the property of the condemned was often divided among the accusers, personal hatred and cupidity had free play. The corrupt Turkish police made the afflictions of an unfortunate population, in which no one could feel certain of not being handed over to the executioner, a source of profit: by threats of accusation they extorted money, and when an accused Bulgarian could not escape from their grasp, and permitted himself to be condemned, they even made a gain out of that, as they marched the condemned from door to door with a cord round his neck, and made the inhabitants give them money in order that the execution might not be carried out at their door. Another cause of unjust sentences was that a reduction was made from the punishment of those who denounced their accomplices. This led a number of the frightened population to accuse others at random, in order to save themselves from being hanged. These executions continued more than two months, not only at the seat of the original rising, but through all Bulgaria and in the districts which remained perfectly tranquil. The reprisals fell especially on the wealthy classes. At Tatar-Bazardjik seventeen gibbets were permanently established, and were almost continually occupied. The total number of victims cannot be estimated at less than 20,000. For six weeks the country from Kazanlik to Eski Saghra was like a charnel house, and could only be traversed with a piece of camphor to the nose. Corpses were lying on the roads, in the fields, in the gardens, rotting in the sun, and diffusing an insupportable effluvium. The few Bulgarians who had survived were hiding themselves, and the Turks had other things to do than find graves for their victims. The latter, in the end, were punished for their barbarity and negligence; fever declared itself at Kazanlik, and made considerable ravages in the army.

After the Bashi-bazouks came the famine. The refugees arrived in crowds; some—who had been

fortunate enough to follow the Russians—at Gabrova and Drenova in the valley of the Jantra, where their countrymen relieved them as best they could; others at Philippopolis and Adrianople, around the great centres, where they hoped to be placed under the protection of the authorities, but where, abandoned by all, they suffered every possible privation and perished by hundreds. Those who remained in the devastated district were in still greater need of means of livelihood; their harvests had been destroyed, their cattle taken away, provisions of every sort stolen or burnt, and terror made them conceal themselves in the cellars or among the ruins of their houses, where famine speedily completed the work of the Bashi-bazouks.

This frightful distress and the terrible sufferings of the population—both Mussulman and Christian—led to attempts being made in various directions to mitigate the sufferings and relieve the distress by means of British charity. To this end several societies were formed and large sums of money were collected, and distribution was made of food and clothing to the wretched fugitives, both Bulgarian and Turkish, who had been deprived of home and support by the war. A good work was also done by some of the charitable societies among the wounded soldiers, both Russian and Turkish. Among the agencies engaged in this good work may be mentioned—the Committee for Relief of Sick and Wounded Russian Soldiers, the Stafford House Committee, the National Aid Society for Sick and Wounded Soldiers in time of War, the Russian Red Cross Society, the British Hospital and Ambulance Fund Committee, and the Turkish Compassionate Fund; the chief movers in the two latter being Lady Strangford and the Baroness Burdett Coutts respectively. The manner in which these societies carried on their operations, amidst scenes of desolation and misery, is well told by Captain Gambier, who has already been more than once referred to in this chapter. Writing from Adrianople on the 8th August, he said:—

“In my last letter I endeavoured to give some idea of the dreadful scene of misery at Karabunar, when the fugitives from Eskizaa and the neighbouring villages, to the number of 7000 or 8000, had collected there after their weary march of thirty miles. On looking back I can scarcely imagine that it was a reality, so completely beyond what any living person had ever probably witnessed was the horror of the scene. I am not aware of any

parallel in modern history where the bodily pain of gun-shot and sabre wounds, or the agonizing death from thirst and starvation, has fallen on the women and children of the land. Moreover, at least three-quarters of these women are bereft for ever of husbands and brothers, and the children of fathers; their homes are mere blackened heaps, their land a bear-garden, and their cattle driven off; and they absolutely possess nothing in this wide world but the dusty, blood-stained rags they stand in.

“I found on arriving here that Mr. Blunt, the consul, Mr. Black, director of the Ottoman Bank, and a few other gentlemen, had done what they could, without funds, to relieve this mass of suffering people. It was natural that the Turkish fugitives, in coming to a large Turkish town, should find themselves better off than the Bulgarians, who were here complete strangers. In every Turkish house in the town there are now three or four fugitives, and the Jewish population have been equally hospitable to their fellow-countrymen. But the Bulgarians have had to be provided with food and shelter by the Government; and this—through the efforts of the above-named gentlemen, and also through the exertions of the Vali himself, who has taken immense interest in the matter, and has been down to the railway station to see the people arrive on several occasions—has been tolerably well effected in a temporary manner. Mr. Blunt got permission from the Vali to order any quantity of bread, and was thus enabled to meet the trains with carts containing sometimes 2000 loaves. The wounded women and children were conveyed away in arabas and distributed about, but there, unfortunately, attendance on them seems at present to have broken down. It is hoped, however, in a few days to be able to collect them, as a Greek gentleman has liberally placed at the disposal of the committee some large cocoon stores not far from the railway station, which will be converted into a hospital for wounded women and children of all nationalities, as soon as the funds and the necessary bedding, &c., can be procured. A small hospital has been organized, and is being most ably conducted by a lady whom England may be proud of, as she is the only person of her position in Adrianople who has had the courage to remain in the town. Her name is Mrs. Camara, and her father was English. Alone and unaided she immediately, on hearing of these dreadful massacres,

took a large house and opened it, trusting a good deal to Providence, for fugitive Turkish women wounded or not wounded. When I visited her establishment yesterday I found no less than eighty-six women and children, well fed, well housed, clean, and orderly, out of whom twenty-six were wounded, one or two mortally I believe. I found this admirable lady, in most workman-like costume, down on her knees holding a little child who was kicking and screaming while the doctor was dressing a large sword-cut wound in his back. All round were the wounded, many not yet attended to, but all to be dealt with in good time; while in the shady garden little girls and boys were playing and laughing as if there was no such thing as misery in the world, and already quite forgetting what they had so lately passed through. Mrs. Camara receives rations from the Government for each of her proteges, but nothing else, and is so far entirely dependent on her own resources. In the suburb of Ilderim the Greek patriarch has offered shelter to a large number of refugees, who are, I believe, all Bulgarians.

"As to the total number of fugitives in Adrianople alone there is some little difficulty in obtaining proper information, as a great many are known not to be drawing Government rations. To-day there were in Adrianople and the suburbs 13,500 supplied with rations, of whom it is estimated about 11,000 are Bulgarians. On the roads leading from the scene of the exodus, the Sandjaks of Philippopolis and Eski Saghra, there are 3000 arabas, or country bullock carts, on their way down; and allowing the lowest average—namely, four to a cart—it will bring the number of fugitives in this town alone to 25,500. I give these figures as I have received them to-day at the Konak, or Governor-general's palace, indeed from the Pasha himself.

"It is not surprising that with this sudden and enormous influx the price of provisions should be going up, and in the last two days it has increased about ten per cent. I was told by a merchant that there must soon be a great scarcity of flour in the place, which will be difficult to supply, as the crops are for hundreds of miles rotting in the fields, and the maize eaten short off by the untended cattle.

"But the fugitives and their wounded are by no means the only strain on the resources of the town of Adrianople, for, in addition to all these,

there is the garrison, some 3000 or 4000 men, and something over 2000 wounded soldiers. The wounded soldiers are being far better attended than I could have expected. Great difficulty was at first entertained of being able to have them, but that is now not so much felt as the want of surgeons. The military hospitals, which I visited yesterday and found clean and well-ventilated, contain about 600 men, the civil hospital some 200 more; while the rest are distributed about the town in what are called boujeklik, or large wooden buildings for storing silk cocoons, which seem designed by Providence for hospitals, so admirably suited are they to this purpose. Besides this, to their credit it must be recorded, the Sisters of the Assumption have undertaken to house and nurse between sixty and seventy wounded soldiers at some houses in different suburbs. These men are medically attended by Dr. Critis, the medical officer of the Railway Company.

"The Red Crescent Society are undertaking the sole charge of another hospital, which is to contain 260 patients. They hope in a few days to have it all in working order. The staff of surgeons is not nearly sufficient; but at the same time it is difficult to employ more Europeans, as the Turks pretend to be looking after their own hospitals, and they are, no doubt, doing their little possible in that way. They muster twenty-seven in all, among whom is one inspector of hospitals with colonel's rank. I was told that they intend to set apart one hospital for fever cases. At present fever patients and wounded are mixed up together. The general appearance of the wounded was remarkably healthy and happy. Their beds were clean and fresh, and the loose white shirts looked comfortable. Among them there are few seriously wounded, which is easily accounted for by the fact that if they had been they would still be lying on the battle-field, till starvation or a Bulgarian put an end to them, as, in the absence of any kind of ambulance, it is only those who are not seriously wounded who escape. This is very sad, and increases the horrors of this already too dreadful war. At Yeni Saghra, the other day, we picked up a man who had been lying wounded for six days and nights without food or water. This was his own statement, and is borne out by the dates; for he could not possibly have gone back to Yeni Saghra after the defeat of the army there, and he was found the sixth day

after the battle. He may have found water and biscuits on some of the dead, who lay thick all round him.

"It will be a matter of great interest to the subscribers to the various Medical Relief Societies, which are doing such admirable work out here, to learn how that work is going on and what plan of action has been adopted. It is most satisfactory to see the perfect cordiality that exists among these gentlemen, and the total absence of anything like rivalry or jealousy. There are at present at work in Turkey three distinct organizations, all wearing the Red Crescent and all employed in the same manner.

"The Stafford House Committee, which worked all through the Servian war, and has continued to do so up to the present time, had up to the middle of last June confined itself to sending out stores and money to be distributed and administered chiefly by Ahmed Vefyk Pasha, President of the House of Representatives; but it was then thought necessary to appoint a special commissioner, Mr. Barrington Kennett, under whose direction the following work has been done:—Seven English surgeons have been engaged and are now at work, while four or five more are on their way out from England. Several local surgeons, principally Greeks and Armenians, have been employed in their own districts, and are found to act very well on the whole. In addition to these, Lord Blantyre, who is one of the most active and energetic members of the Stafford House Committee, has at his own expense, and with very liberal salaries, despatched eight surgeons, who, though independent to a certain extent, are affiliated to the Stafford House Committee, and receive from it any money and stores over and above those provided by Lord Blantyre, which they may require. These fifteen surgeons are distributed as follows:—Four to Erzeroum, three to Adrianople, two to Silistria, one on transport duty on the Rustchuk and Varna line, three in Shumla-Rasgrad district. A waggon transport under Colonel Borthwick, known as Mahir Bey in Turkey, is doing most valuable work in the Shumla district, and has lately transported great numbers of sick from the Shumla hospital to the Shumla Road Station. Lord Melgund had also kindly undertaken to distribute some of the Stafford House money in the Osman-Bazar district. A waggon transport has been organized in the Eski Saghra district for communication with the Balkans and the head of the

Jamboli-Tirnova Railway. This particular line of transport is most urgently required, and will be superintended by Mr. Barrington Kennett. A large supply of stores has been forwarded to Erzeroum under charge of Lieutenant Malcolm Drummond, R.N.; these will be distributed in that district by two of Lord Blantyre's surgeons. Hospitals have been established at and supplies sent by the Stafford House Committee to Rustchuk and Varna. These hospitals have since been handed over to the Red Crescent Society, who will bear the expenses of working them, the Stafford House Committee supplying doctors and stores. Mr. E. R. Pratt, of Ryston Hall, has come out to act as assistant commissioner, and has been left in Constantinople, with free powers to act for Mr. Kennett during his absence. The Stafford House Committee is now under the protection and enjoys all the privileges of the Red Crescent, as secured to that body by the Geneva Convention. These advantages are many—immunity from capture by the enemy, free transport of persons and *matériel* by rail or steamer, all stores warehoused, and distribution carefully recorded free of charge, and all difficulties about customs and landing removed. This has been secured to the Stafford House Committee by Mr. Kennett having accepted a seat on the Red Crescent Committee.

"The Red Crescent Society is the National Ottoman Society for the Relief of Sick and Wounded, and was established under the personal favour of his Majesty the Sultan, who contributed £2500 to the subscriptions. His Majesty takes great interest in the Society, and has given them a committee room in the Dolma-Batché palace. For some time there was a great dearth of money, but subscriptions have lately come in, and they now hold about £16,000, which has chiefly come from the Mussulman population of India. Subcommittees are formed in all the principal towns in the provinces, which are composed of the representatives of the Ottoman Bank and the local medical officers of health. They are energetically preparing and distributing large supplies of stores, and have undertaken to provide each army in the field with hired or bought trains of country waggons, supplied with mattresses and a surgeon. Besides the Rustchuk and Varna hospitals before mentioned, they are fitting up a large hospital at Anatolie Kavak, on the Bosphorus, and another on the Dardanelles.

"The third society is the British National Society for Aid to Sick and Wounded, which Society despatched the ship *Belle* of Dundee, under Mr. Commissary Young, with seven surgeons, who are distributed as follows:—Two surgeons with their staff with the army of Suleiman Pasha, in the Balkan districts; two at Varna, who will join the staff of Mehemet Ali Pasha, the Commander-in-chief; two at Batoum; and one who will probably remain on board the ship, as she is to be converted into a hospital transport ship, and will ply between all Black Sea Turkish ports and Constantinople. I cannot speak too highly of the admirable conduct of the gentlemen of this society whom I have met in the field. After the defeat of Raouf's army, on which occasion they were in the very thickest of the battle, for many days and nights their labours were incessant, and many Turkish soldiers have to thank Dr. Leslie and Dr. Meyrick for limbs or lives saved. Their attentions, too, to the poor wounded women and children were incessant, while they sacrificed every thought of personal comfort and rest to alleviate their sufferings.

"In addition to the above societies, there are several ladies' committees in Constantinople and the Bosphorus that are doing very valuable work in preparing bandages, making beds, sheets, and such like necessaries. At Therapia, Mrs. Layard, Lady Kemball, and Mrs. Hanson have been most active, and have received grants of money and material from the Stafford House and Red Crescent Committees. The Princess of Reuss has also formed a committee at Buyukderé with the same object, and has already supplied a very great number of beds and bandages to various hospitals. All these societies and sub-committees are working together with the sole object of relieving suffering, regardless of creed or nationality, and sinking anything like petty competition among themselves."

A good work was manifestly done by the agents of the above societies; and although the misery of both combatants and non-combatants was far in excess of anything that could be met by private agency, yet it is pleasing to know that so earnest an attempt was made by the charitable public in Great Britain and elsewhere.

CHAPTER XXV.

Russian Generalship up to the Capture of Nikopol—Faults of their subsequent Movements—Dangers menacing their Right Flank—Military Operations influenced by Financial Considerations—Unexpected ease of Russian Successes—Favourable Position of the Turks in spite of the carelessness of their Leaders—General aspect of Bulgaria from Sistova to the Balkans—Count von Moltke on the approach to Tirnova—Aims of the Russian Commanders—Their singular oversight of the Widdin Turkish Army—Emulation of German Strategy—Forces at the disposal of the two Combatants—The Grand-duke Nicholas misled by his first easy Successes—Imprudent dispersion of his Army—Description of the district around Plevna—Situation of the Town—Its picturesque appearance—Towns on the banks of the Vid and its Tributaries—Villages between Teteven and Plevna—Course of the Osma from the Balkans to the Danube—Population of the Country watered by it—Roads connecting the Osma and Vid—An advance on Plevna ordered before success could be insured—Abdul Kerim orders Osman Pasha to the scene of action—Foresight of Abdul Kerim—Schildner-Schuldner intrusted with the command of the first Expedition—Insufficiency of the attacking Force—Weakness of Schildner-Schuldner's Dispositions—Operations up to the evening of the 19th July—Osman Pasha prepares to defend Plevna—Commencement of the Attack—The Turks take the offensive, but are driven back by the Vologda and Archangel Regiments—A Russian occupation of Plevna, which costs dear—Disastrous Surprise of the Troops—Loss of more than 1000 men—Capture of the Turkish Intrenchments—Impossibility of retaining the Positions occupied—A Retreat ordered by General Schildner-Schuldner—Omission of Osman Pasha to profit by his Victory—Considerable Losses of Russian Ammunition and Baggage—Loss of half the attacking Force—Mismanagement of the Enterprise—Important Political as well as Military results of the Failure—Active assistance of Roumania—First Russian occupation of Lovatz—Evacuated after the Plevna defeat—Dreadful Massacres by the Turks on regaining the Town—Determination of the Russian Commander to occupy Plevna at any cost—Steps taken by Osman Pasha to strengthen his Position—Development by the Turks of an extraordinary Genius for Military Engineering—Defensive Works of Plevna described—The great Grivica Redoubt—Plevna becomes a formidable Intrenched Camp—Biographical sketch of Osman Pasha, the Defender of Plevna—General Schachowskoi sets out with the 11th Corps to the assistance of General Krudener—Difficulty of taking Plevna—Schachowskoi takes precautions against an Attack from the Lovatz side—General Michael Skobelev reconnoitres Plevna—Council of War on the 29th July—Military dispositions for Attack on the following day—Failure of the Generals to profit by previous experience—Defensive condition of Plevna on the day of Attack—Capture of Radisovo—General Skobelev, on the Left Flank, meets with formidable Difficulties—Brilliant conduct of him and his Men—General Schachowskoi resolves to attack without waiting for Krudener—Capture of the first Turkish Positions—Assault upon the Second, and more Formidable Line of Works—Stubborn defence of the Turks, and fearful losses of the Russians—Failure of the attack, and slaughter of Russian wounded—Part taken by General Krudener—Attack upon the great Grivica Redoubt—Terrible Carnage—The Turks Victorious here also—Retreat of the Russians—Official Reports of Russian and Turkish losses—Bravery of the Russian Troops—Advantages of Modern Fire-arms in Intrenchments—Attack and Defence in the Future—The Fatal Mistake of the Russians in not occupying Plevna and Lovatz on their advance to Tirnova—Osman Pasha resolves to maintain a purely defensive Position—Panic at Sistova on arrival of the news of Defeat—Steps taken by the Russian Commanders to inspire confidence—The *Invalide Russe* on the State of the Russian Army—Panic at Tirnova—Removal of the Russian Head-quarters—Mr. Archibald Forbes, of the *Daily News*, on Russian Strategy in the Assaults on Plevna—Critical position of the Russians after their Defeat by Osman Pasha—Embarrassment of the Grand-duke.

THE easy passage of the Danube at Sistova, the bold and successful seizure of the Balkan Passes, and the capture of Nikopol, all seemed to be evidences of a clear and vigorous generalship on the part of the Russians, and of unaccountable inefficiency on that of the Turks. The capture of Nikopol was absolutely necessary in order to secure a sufficient stretch of river to insure the safety of the pontoon bridges at Sistova; and costly as was such an immediate march upon Turkish fortifications, it was certainly far easier than the task would have been had it been delayed, even if only for a few days. The movements of the Russians, however, after July 16 tended somewhat to qualify the opinion which had been formed as to the excellence of their strategical dispositions.

The only justification for an exhibition of contempt for the Turk as an adversary should have been the possession of very accurate information as to his resources and probable tactics. This the Russians appear not to have had, and their movements after the capture of Nikopol were much more rapid than either their numbers or their means of communication justified. It is true the formidable array of fortresses on the left flank of their advance were duly considered, and precautions taken to arrest any sudden danger from Turkish forces near them; but the right flank remained comparatively unprotected, and there the Russians were speedily made aware of the existence of an enemy not to be despised, and around whose extemporized fortifications the bloodiest battles of the war were to be fought. It is to the

operations against the Turkish general and army, thus unexpectedly developed, that we propose to devote the present chapter.

The proceedings of the Russians on their right flank would almost justify the singular question as to whether they had any definite plan of campaign at all? There is a plan to some extent classic, namely, that of the war of 1828-29, which consists in securing a first base of operations by taking the strong places of the Quadrilateral, then advancing upon the Balkans and making them a new base of operations, with Adrianople for an objective. Under ordinary circumstances this plan would almost necessarily involve two campaigns: the first year's, on the one side of the Balkans; that of the year following, on the other. The Russians partly, no doubt, in obedience to the necessities of their financial position—which was not very brilliant, and which a two years' war would seriously affect for a long time—and apparently convinced, on the other hand, that they were in a position to crush their adversary by weight of numbers, seem to have rejected this method in order to seek a more speedy triumph. To inundate the country with their numerous cavalry, force the weak points in the enemy's line, profit rapidly by his mistakes, shake his confidence by threatening him on all sides by the occupation of positions weakly defended, and bewilder him by the audacity of their cavalry; to seize immediate advantages in order to avoid being drawn into a war of sieges; in a word, to snatch a favourable peace by means of successes—astounding if not substantial—by some grand stroke, such would seem to have been their project, and it does not savour of a plan deeply laid beforehand.

The crossing of the Danube, accomplished with unexpected ease; the occupation of the line of the Jantra, abandoned without resistance; the taking of Tirnova; and the passage of the Balkans—General Gourko's corps penetrating into the heart of the empire within a few hours of Adrianople—seem to have led the Russians to fancy for a moment that success was within their grasp. Europe, stupified by a strategy which defied all rules, began to ask whether there was any Turkish army, and whether the soldiers of the Czar were going to reach Constantinople without having to fight a single battle. In one day, the Rustchuk army might have hurried to Sistova and driven into the Danube the 30,000 or 40,000 Rus-

sians who first crossed, having for their only line of retreat an unfinished bridge, already broken in several places; it might at least have defended the strong line of the Jantra; Tirnova might have been fortified and the Balkans covered; but nothing of all this was done. There was a panic at Constantinople, and the Ottoman Empire seemed doomed.

Had the Turks, on the other hand, any plan of defence? It is still more difficult to answer this question, Abdul Kerim, who held the supreme command during the first part of the campaign, having been removed without having revealed his designs; but the almost complete absence of preparations for resistance upon the defensive lines of Bulgaria, would appear to have been the result of incapacity rather than calculation. Nevertheless, the faults into which the rashness of the Russians led them, while taking advantage of those of the Turks, turned the scale for a time in favour of the latter. It was soon seen that all the principles of military science could not be violated with impunity, even in the presence of an enemy that was negligent and badly qualified to take the offensive. The Russian army, scattered along a line of 125 miles, separated from part of its forces by the Balkans, and shut in between four armies with a total strength at least equal to its own, and which were resting upon first-class fortresses, ended, through being so stretched out, by becoming unequal to the task imposed upon it. If the Turks had premeditated what was really only the result of the carelessness of their leaders, the situation could not have been more favourable to them.

From Sistova to the Balkans Bulgaria forms a vast plateau, intersected by the valley of the Jantra on the east, and by the Osma on the west, and which rises by a gentle but continuous slope towards the chain of mountains at the foot of which Tirnova is situated. On quitting the banks of the Danube, the ground becomes broken and undulating, and Bulgaria immediately assumes a charming aspect—hills covered with verdant turf up to the summit, and very fertile; magnificent clusters of trees, rich pastures, with here and there isolated tracts of cultivated land, which show what the whole country might be under favourable conditions. Such is the general aspect of the district, which resembles certain parts of southern Germany, where the Alps slope away in rounded hills, covered with forests.

Advancing towards the Balkans, the character of the country becomes more marked, the soil still more fertile, the meadows richer and more green, the scenery more picturesque, the clusters of trees are succeeded on the tops of the hills by luxuriant forests, the Bulgarian population becomes more dense and more independent. Count von Moltke, in his letters upon the East, remarks on approaching Tirnova—"What a marvellous country this Bulgaria is! everything is green. The sides of the deep valleys are planted with lime and wild pear trees, wide meadows form frame-work for the rivers, rich corn fields cover the plains, and even the vast uncultivated tracts are covered with luxuriant herbage. The numerous trees, planted singly, cast their black shadows upon the plains of brilliant green."

To take possession of this plateau, then secure their flanks by sending a corps to operate against Rustchuk on the one side and Nikopol on the other, was the first aim of the Russian staff. It was supposed that the Turks had an army posted at Rustchuk to cover the line of the Lower Jantra, of which Biela was the key; and another at Shumla, to defend the Upper Jantra position, whose key was Tirnova. On the side of Nikopol it was known that the Turks had assembled an army at Widdin, which was considered, with some show of reason, to be too far from the scene of action to constitute a source of danger. The statements as to the strength of these armies were very contradictory; the newspapers asserted that disease and scarcity of provisions had decimated the troops of the Quadrilateral, and that 40,000 Turkish soldiers were in hospital. Misled by the inexplicable inaction of their adversaries, the Russians seem to have attached too great importance to these reports, which turned out to have no foundation. With most unaccountable obtuseness, too, the simple fact was entirely overlooked, that the Widdin army *might* possibly move from Widdin; and with a slovenliness or temerity which cost them dear, the Russians took little pains to ascertain whether this army was moving or not.

The omission of good reconnaissances was not the only grave oversight of the Russian commanders. It was clear that the brilliant victories of 1870-71 had given rise to a most lively admiration of German strategy amongst them. Militaire, the Minister for War, until then decidedly

in favour of the French system, was zealous in reorganizing the army on the German model, and the generals were impregnated with what they believed to be German strategical science. The imitation of these operations was clearly seen in the present war. If that which succeeded so well with the one (Germans) was so unsuccessful for the other, it was because the Russians lacked two things which they did not take into consideration—an organization which enabled the Germans to assemble enormous armies at the first alarm (600,000 men in 1870), and a country for fighting similar to that in which the Germans carried on their operations.

With vast armies it is possible to mask strong places, to protect the flanks and still to keep an army to march in advance—to *do*, in short, what the Russians *attempted*; while with a country like France, where in default of railroads excellent roads are laid out, victualling is easy, and in time of need the country itself could support an invading army for a considerable time. In the Russian invasion of Turkey in 1877 each of these conditions was wanting. The roads were of the very poorest; the population, even where well affected towards the invader, could afford him comparatively little aid; and the invading force was anything but overwhelming.

Up to about the 18th July five and a half army corps only had crossed the Danube at Sistova, which at the rate of 25,000 men for each army corps gave 140,000 men, a number which was very far from giving the numerical superiority to the Russians, which was indispensable for the accomplishment of their plans. In the meantime the Turks had been able to collect at Rustchuk about 40,000 men, under the command of Achmed Eyoub Pasha; 60,000 men at Shumla, under Abdul Kerim; 45,000 men under the command of Suleiman Pasha, on the south side of the Balkans; and from 40,000 to 45,000 men at Plevna, or on their way to Plevna, under the command of Osman Pasha. After allowing a part of these forces to be used as garrison troops, the Turkish generals could yet put not less than 140,000 men in the field in Bulgaria. The overlooking of this fact was the chief cause of the faults committed by the Grand-duke Nicholas. Feeling quite convinced of being able to speedily crush the Turks, and confirmed in this conviction by the ease of his first successes, he neglected to establish suffi-

cient means of communication between the army of operation and his stores; for too long a time he contented himself with the bridge at Simnitsa for a line of communication and retreat; for the same reason he undertook the campaign in Bulgaria with too narrow a base of operations. For the same reason again, believing himself certain of being able to face all eventualities, he despatched part of his troops across the Balkans, and scattered his army on a line extended utterly out of proportion to the number of men which he had at his disposal, without taking the precaution of securing his flanks. Lastly, he did not foresee the formation of Osman Pasha's army, and did not suspect that his right flank could be threatened by forces coming from Sophia, Nissa, and Widdin.

About the middle of July the following was the situation of the Russian army: the 12th and 13th Corps occupied the line of the Lom; the 11th Corps was on its way to reinforce them; half of the 4th Corps was still in the neighbourhood of Sistova; the 9th Corps was near Nikopol; the 8th Corps was on its march to cross the Balkans, and the Corps of General Gourko was on the other side of those mountains. These corps extended in a rectangle of 125 miles in length, and they communicated by two or three roads scarcely worthy of the name. This line of operation was everywhere vulnerable, its fragility was extreme; and we should seek in vain in history for another example of so imprudent a development. A vigorous combined movement of Abdul Kerim and of Osman Pasha might have cut it in two; and the Russian army divided, was lost. Not a single man of the troops engaged in the Balkans could have escaped, and the rest—having for a line of retreat only a bridge unprotected from a surprise which might easily have been arranged by a couple of daring gunboat captains—would have been very dangerously exposed. In the presence of an European army and of European generals a complete disaster would have been almost inevitable, but the Grand-duke Nicholas had apparently included Turkish incapacity as an element in his calculations: he was not wholly deceived, and in spite of cruel reverses he was still more fortunate than he deserved.

And here it may be appropriate, before proceeding to describe the sanguinary struggles which invested the district around Plevna with such a tragic renown, to lay before our readers some

description of a locality now so celebrated, and to which such frequent reference will have to be made.

The tract of country with which the events of our present and some succeeding chapters are chiefly concerned lies between the two Bulgarian rivers Osma and Vid, and is a plateau in the form of an irregular oblong. Its length from the Danube to the Kodji Balkans (that is, the Balkans west of Shipka) is about ninety-six miles. It is bounded on the west by the river Vid, on the east by the Osma, on the north by the Danube, and on the south by the Kodji Balkans. The river Vid takes its rise in the Kodji Balkans. From it flow two principal streams, the Black and the White Vid. At a distance of ten miles from their source the Black and White Vid mingle, and form the river known as the Vid. The main course of the Vid is from south to north, and this river, though it winds considerably, is not so erratic as either the Jantra or the Osma. The Vid flows for a distance of ninety-six miles, and receives the waters of many minor streams, especially on the side of the right bank. The names of these various tributary streams, as well as of the several towns within the area we are describing, now possess an historic interest, in view of the stirring scenes which transpired around them. We need scarcely ask the reader's indulgence, therefore, for presenting what may at first sight seem but a collection of topographical curiosities. Near the source of the Vid the Katsimunitsa, Murtevitsa, and the Sheikovitsa, add their waters; then come the Kalenitsa and the Ogorchin; lower down the Chernetchka, the Tuchenitsa, and the Grivica.

The Vid and its tributaries flow through deep passes midst high and rugged hills. A somewhat extensive valley lies to the right bank of the Vid, at a point where that river is met by some of its tributaries. In a valley of considerable size, through which flow the mingled waters of the Tuchenitsa and the Grivica, is situated the now famous town of Plevna. It is about, as the crow flies, twenty-seven miles S.S.W. of Nikopol, and five miles east of the Vid. The town had a population of 1627 Mahometan and 1474 Christian families, comprising about 17,000 souls. There were eighteen mosques, nine minarets, and two churches—one named after Saints Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of Bulgaria, the other after St. Peter. Almost the only object of interest in it was the hospital, which, like most other works

of public usefulness or benevolence in these regions—roads, schools, orphanages, saving-banks, &c.—was a creation of Midhat Pasha while he was governor of the Vilayet of the Danube. Bulgarians, Circassians, Tartars, Gipsies, used the hospital; the Turks seldom, and with the greatest unwillingness. There were, till the war, a normal school and eight Turkish elementary schools, which were attended by 1654 boys and 110 girls, while five Bulgarian schools had 921 boys and fifty girls.

The river on which Plevna stands is the Tuchenitsa, which just below the town is joined by the stream from Grivica, and the united waters fall into the Vid, about seven miles lower down. The valley is cut through limestone formation; steep, rough cliffs rise precipitously on the northern side, but the banks on the southern side are less difficult. Lying in a valley, and bowered amongst a multitude of fruit trees, the town has a picturesque appearance; and being sheltered by high ground from the cold north wind, enjoys an exceptionally mild and healthy climate. Most of the land around was the property of Mussulman Bulgarians, descendants of renegade ancestors; but here, as elsewhere, this arrangement did not tend to promote harmony even among men of the same race.

On the banks of the Vid and of its tributaries, especially about half-way down the main stream, in the neighbourhood of Plevna, is a thick population. Higher up the Vid, on its right bank, lies the small town of Teteven, with its 4000 inhabitants. The town is built on the northern slopes of the Balkans, opposite the pass of Tek-Klesura-Rahmani. This pass is but little frequented. In the town of Teteven there are two churches, a nunnery, and an infant school. There are four roads leading from Teteven—one to the west through Goleny, Bolgarsky, Izvor, to the metalled road which connects Orchhanie and Plevna; another to the east to Trojan, which lies on the higher course of the Osma; a third leading through Glojhan, Gradishnitsa, Galata, Jhelezná, Lejhnitsa, Golema, Lezedren, Koleeba, and Yablonitsa to Lovatz; a fourth along the banks of the Vid, by the Monastery of St. George, Glojhan, Gezen, Toros, and Aglen, to Plevna.

Between Teteven and Plevna there are many villages on the banks of the Vid. On the right bank lie the following:—Glojhan, Lezedra, Gezen,

Gradishnitsa, Turetsky (Turkish), Izvor or Kalinik, Izvor Maliye (Little), Ogorchin, Riyazanova, Aglen, Sadovets, Bakats, Katunets, Mikra, Drayana, Beglish, Barkas, Krujhevitsa, Basvid (where there is a ferry across the Vid), Kirtozabene, Peternica, Kessel, Medeven, Oojhendol, Kirtozab, Brestovec, Karaguj, Rajjevo, Laskar, Perdilovo, Trenina, Blazivas, Olchagas.

The left bank of the Vid has a larger population and a better line of communication than the right. On it are situated, among others, the following villages:—Bolgarsky Izvor, the Monastery of St. George, Bresnitsa, Malaya, and Golema Jeneeki, Toros, Dermants, Lejhnitsa, Rakita, Sweenar, Tehirikovo, Krushivitsa, Kebek, Maduvan, Trajlovan, Disevica, Plazagas, and behind these, to the west of Plevna, Dobneek and Gornje.

To the north of Plevna, on the right bank of the Vid, are situated Plezitza, Bukova, Lipa, Oponetz, Bivolar, Chopentsi, Kacemunica, Riben, Komara, Kreta, Cherkeskaya, Magala, Bresliyanitsa, Sejkova and Kopriva, Hisarlik, Gavreni, Samlivo, and Samovid.

To the north of Plevna, on the left bank of the Vid, are Mitropol, Dolnay, Demirkoi, Trstenik, Bolgarsky, Murtevica, Kuchan, Tlokula, Giljany, and Mokrishami.

The river Osma forms the eastern boundary of the plateau which we have described. This river, like the Vid, takes its rise in the Kodji Balkans. The source is marked by two streams called the White and Black Osmas. These meeting at Trojan form what is known as the Osma. The upper portion of the river, from Trojan to Lovatz, flows in an almost direct line from south to north. From Lovatz it then takes a turn in a northeasterly direction, to which it adheres for about twenty-three miles, *i.e.*, to the small town of Kozarbelini. At this point the Osma, having made almost a complete circle, turns to the northwest. As it approaches the Danube, about two miles short of the small town of Turkomila, it takes a straight course from south to north, and falls into the Danube west of Nikopol. In this way the Osma in the middle of its course, from Lovatz to Turkomila, makes a considerable circle, the arc of which faces the east. The tract of country lying within this circle has for its intersecting line the river Vid, and for its centre, Plevna; and is the district chiefly concerned with

the military operations described in the present chapter.

As on the side of the right bank many minor streams flow into the Vid, so also many join the Osma on the left. Between Trojan and Lovatz are the following: the Loposhnitsa, the Sukha-Raka, and the Shakhunkai. Between Lovatz and Bulgareni the Osma is joined by the Rak-hovitza, the Doiran, the Drenova, the Letnitsa, the Kamenitsa, and more to the north of Bulgareni by the Poradim. Almost all these smaller streams have small tributaries of their own. The river Osma with its tributaries, like the Vid and its tributaries, flows through hills, passes, and valleys, and as a general rule has a very tortuous course.

The population of the country watered by the Osma and its tributaries is considerably larger than that of the country through which flow the Vid and its tributaries. From the north, *i.e.*, from Nikopol, to the south to Bulgareni, we find the following settlements:—On the left bank of the Osma, Tserkovitza, Chronovitsa, Turkomil, Debova, Senadinska, Mahalij, Sirgulija, Vasova, Cerkeskoselo, Grenchevitsa, Tserkalovitcha, and Bulgareni. On the right bank of the Osma, Jhurnuselo, Muslimelo, Slatina, Markhovitsa, Novadja, Timood, Novoselo, Trncevica, Dervis-Selai and Chaushka-Makhala, which is opposite Bulgareni. In the space which lies between Bulgareni and Lovatz, a distance of thirty-two miles, the following villages are found on the left bank of the Osma: Ortakai, Karach, Kaligirva, Lelnica, Smrdeca, Katarice, Karahasan, Dojran, Eglav, Pavlikan. On the right bank, Kosar, Belina, Varena, Gradishnitsa, Lydza, Krusina, Lejhan, Devetak, Tipai, Omarkai, Jurukler, Smochan, Preseka.

Throughout the entire course of the Osma between Bulgareni and Lovatz, on both banks, but especially on the right, are scattered many “cheefliks” (Turkish manor farms).

Between Lovatz and Trojan are situated on the left bank of the Osma, Poradim, Mirkovo, Leven, Khan-Arabli (Arapli), Yablonitsa, Taranlee, Aladanli, Lejhnitsa, Khan-Lomets, Dolbog (or Dolny Bognol), and Velchevska, Teplovitsa Kaleitsa, Balabanka; on the right bank, Tatarli, Bulgareni, Dobroden, Belish, and two or three “cheefliks” (manor farms).

The plateau which has been described is a highland stretching from the Balkans to the Danube.

It is intersected by rivers and streams which flow through deep passes, and it is marked out by cross-roads over which are scattered towns and villages.

The cross roads which connect the Osma and the Vid are six in number. The most important of these is the large road leading from Biela through Bulgareni to Plevna. From Bulgareni it goes west along the valley of the Osma until it is met by the small river Poradim, on which lies the village of Radenice. Passing in a westerly direction, after leaving the valley for the higher ground, the road goes round the villages of Vina, Karadac, Palasa, and Grivica. It then descends into the Plevna valley. On the right of the road lie Terkalovitsa, Trstenik, Kojulovce, Palats, Verbica, Bukova; on the left, Radenice, Suleimandere, Poradim, Sgalievica, Radisovo. Passing through Plevna and over the river Vid this road then turns to the south-west in the direction of the town of Orchanie, and connects Plevna with Sophia. From Plevna a road turns to the south-east of Lovatz. This is considered one of the best roads. It traverses the high land between the small streams of Tuchenitsa and Chernechka. On the right side of the road going from Plevna to Lovatz lie the villages of Krisin, Brestovec, Shelkovitsa, Uchindol, Setova, Novoselo, Bavitza (Bakhovitsa), Lizets, Poradim; on the left side, Raditscheva, Tucenica, Bogot, and some cheefliks (manor farms). From the high road between Bulgareni and Plevna three cross-roads lead to Lovatz from the north, one from Poradim through Vladiana and Slatina, another from Radenice through Suleimandere, Odena, Vuciderna, Drenova, Parlikian; the third from Bulgareni along the left bank of the Osma. From Lovatz three roads lead to the Vid besides that which connects Lovatz with Plevna. One road goes through the small towns of Lizets, Birash, Beglish, Eski-Berkad, and passes out at Tejhitsa, on the Vid. Another road passes through the villages of Poradim, Metodova, Radeveni, Kalenik, and Ogurcheni, and goes as far as Dormanitsa. The third road from Loftcha to the Vid lies more to the south of the first two, and passes through the small towns of Crednu-Makhala, Kalibala, Izvor Turetsky, Mikra, and Sopot. Lastly, to the south of all, the road from Teteven to the town of Trojan passes across the plateau above described in an almost straight easterly direction. This road traverses wild but magnificent scenery, and is the

principal communication used by the inhabitants of the Balkans.

We have already pointed out that, for some time after the passage of the Danube, the Russians had no adequate forces to justify their rapid movements. Under these circumstances, if, after the capture of Nikopol, Baron Krudener had been permitted to simply occupy that place, and to intrench himself within a certain area around it for a time, not only would the intentions of the Turks have been discovered, but a sufficient army might have been accumulated on the Sistova side of the Danube to insure success when the advance in force was made.

The town of Plevna had been entered by a small force of Russian cavalry soon after the crossing of the Danube; but these retired on the appearance of a body of Turks from Sophia, and for several days no attempt was made to re-occupy it by the Russians. Scarcely, however, had the corps of General Krudener partially recovered from their heavy labours in the capture of Nikopol, when their commander received orders from the Grand-duke to re-occupy Plevna immediately.

But unknown to the Grand-duke another general had been ordered to occupy Plevna. Osman Pasha, commander of the Turkish corps concentrated at Widdin, had set out from the latter place with 15,000 men, with the object of reinforcing Nikopol. Immediately, however, on hearing of the capture of that fortress, Osman Pasha was diverted from the due eastward course, and he at once marched on Plevna—there to await orders. A portion of the Nissa (or Nisch) corps from the Servian frontier was at the same time directed to form a junction with him. It is but fair to a Turkish general who was abused more than most of the Sultan's commanders for his obesity and inaction, to say that the credit of bringing Osman Pasha upon the scene at this critical moment was due to the Serdar Ekrem of the Turkish armies, Abdul Kerim. Rightly divining that there was no danger of any attempt being made by the Russians to invade Turkish territory by crossing the river above Nikopol, he at once, on learning of the crossing at Sistova, sent instructions to Osman Pasha to break up his quarters around Widdin, to leave only a small force behind to garrison this latter fortress and Adlie, and to hasten with every available man to the relief of Nikopol. We may even remark, in passing, that it was in consequence

of the urgent and repeated representations of Abdul Kerim, and of Nedjib Pasha, the chief of his staff, that the army of Suleiman Pasha was diverted from its useless campaign in Montenegro and brought up for the defence of the Balkans. The measures thus initiated did not, it is true, bear fruit while Abdul Kerim remained; but none the less must history, now written in calmer days, award to this hardly-judged general the merit due to him of having suggested them. Osman Pasha did not succeed in carrying out his instructions to reinforce Nikopol, but his movement towards Plevna was executed with a celerity which proved very disastrous to the Russian forces. General Krudener was now despatching to occupy that place, as directed by the Grand-duke Nicholas.

The command of the expedition was confided by General Krudener to Lieutenant-general Schilder-Schuldner, who on the 18th of July was ordered to advance with the 1st Brigade of the 5th Infantry Division, four batteries of the 5th Brigade of Artillery, and the 9th regiment of Don Cossacks, by Breslianitsa on Plevna, and to occupy this town with the assistance—1st, of the 19th Kostroma infantry regiment, which with the 5th battery of the 31st Brigade of Artillery, and two sotnias of the 2nd Kouban Cossack regiment, was already on the main road from Biela to Plevna, two battalions, two sotnias, and eight cannon being on the heights at the village of Poradim, and a battalion at Bulgareni with the baggage and artillery caissons; 2nd, of the Caucasus Cossack Brigade (ten sotnias and six guns), which was also at Bulgareni.

It was generally alleged that it was by General Krudener's neglect that Plevna was not earlier occupied in force; but whether that was the case or not, he certainly now committed a mistake in causing it to be attacked by an altogether insufficient number of troops. He was content with a reconnaissance badly executed by some Cossacks, who reported to him that the town was feebly garrisoned; and the Russians thus found, when too late, that they had to fight forces five times as many in number, and occupying fortified positions. To add to the blunder, General Schilder-Schuldner effected his attack in two columns separated by a considerable distance, and which could not afford each other any mutual support. He commenced his march on the 18th, having ordered the Kostroma regiment to call up its third battalion and march upon the village of Sgalievica,

so as to arrive there at two on the afternoon of the 19th, to attack on the south-east, while the Caucasus brigade of Cossacks received orders to march upon Tucenica and attack on the south. The general himself, with the troops which he was leading from Nikopol, was to attack on the north.

After having bivouacked on the night of the 18th at Tchiskovitsa, General Schilder-Schuldner advanced on the 19th, and about two o'clock in the afternoon arrived before Plevna. Finding the town very strongly occupied, he opened a cannonade which ceased at nightfall. The 9th regiment of Don Cossacks, which was marching alone on the right, stopped to bivouac at the village of Riben, and was making soup there when it heard the cannonade about three o'clock in the afternoon. Then the cooking utensils were overturned, and they advanced at a trot in the direction of Plevna. Two or three miles from the town a small detachment of Turkish infantry was perceived, and Colonel Naguibine dismounted half a sotnia and commenced a fusillade which lasted until nightfall. The regiment camped on the position which it occupied in sight of the town, two sotnias being deployed in skirmishing order. On its side the Kostroma regiment (three battalions, with two sotnias, and eight cannon) occupied during the day, according to orders, the village of Sgalievica, and sent two sotnias of Kouban Cossacks to reconnoitre Plevna. Behind the village of Grivica these sotnias found an intrenched Turkish camp. About three squadrons and a battalion with two cannon came out of it and advanced to meet the Cossacks. The latter retreated, and the Turkish cavalry followed them almost to their camp. But having come under the fire of the artillery, the Turks fell back in their turn, and the Cossacks pursued them until they took refuge behind their infantry. On the evening of the 19th, then, the Russians were thus established for the night before Plevna:—The 9th regiment of Don Cossacks (six sotnias), on the extreme right to the north of the town; the 1st Brigade of the 5th Division of infantry with four batteries (six battalions and thirty-two cannon) were more to the left, on the north and north-east; the 19th (Kostroma) regiment, with the 5th battery of the 31st Brigade of artillery and the Kouban Cossacks (three battalions, two sotnias, and eight cannon), to the south-east at Sgalievica; the Caucasus brigade (ten sotnias and six cannon) to the south at Tucenica.

General Schilder ordered an attack next day, the 20th—the cannonade to begin at five o'clock in the morning. Osman Pasha, on his side, observing the dispositions of the Russians, also prepared for the fight. Astonished at the small numbers of the troops which were attacking him, and surmising immediately that they were ignorant of the forces at his disposal, he contrived to set a snare for the Russians in which he hoped to destroy them almost entirely.

Up to the afternoon of the 19th the whole number of Russians around Plevna was only 1500. It is true that towards evening and during the night others arrived; but while the total force at Schilder-Schuldner's disposal on the 20th was only 7500, these had to face nearly 20,000 Turks. The *ruse* of Osman Pasha was to keep this superiority of numbers carefully concealed, until the Russians, believing they had only a force about equal to their own to contend with, advanced sufficiently to enable their retreat to be cut off.

As early as four o'clock in the morning of the 20th, the cordon of Cossacks observed the enemy come out from the town and occupy some intrenchments and a battery, and almost immediately their artillery opened fire. The Cossack videttes speedily rallied, and dismounting, occupied the skirts of a wood on the extreme right, towards which a body of Turkish infantry was advancing. Reinforcing his line little by little, Colonel Naguibine kept back the enemy all day with his fire, a part of his Cossack skirmishers even gaining ground.

When the Turkish infantry, supported by artillery, began to take the offensive, Colonel Naguibine sent word to General Schilder-Schuldner, who at seven o'clock sent him, as a reinforcement, a battery from the reserve (three other batteries were already in position in the centre), supported by two companies taken from the three which had been left to guard the ambulance and baggage of the 1st Brigade of the 5th Infantry Division. This battery shelled the thicket, under cover of which the Turkish skirmishers were advancing, and compelled their reserves to retire to the top of the neighbouring height. The Turks made no further attempt to renew their offensive movement against the Russian right, and, with their battery and two companies of reinforcements, the Cossacks held their ground all day until the order came to retreat.

In the centre, General Schilder-Schuldner, brought into position, at a quarter to five, the 1st and 2nd batteries, and afterwards the 5th battery of the 5th Artillery Brigade. These engaged two of the Turkish batteries—one of which almost enfiladed them.

About five o'clock in the morning the 1st Brigade of the 5th Division of infantry was formed in order of battle as follows:—The 17th (Archangel) regiment on the two sides of the batteries in columns of companies in two lines; one battalion on the left and two battalions on the right of the batteries. The Vologda regiment on the right of the Archangel; two battalions in order of battle, also in columns of companies, in two lines, and the third battalion in reserve. At half-past five General Schilder-Schuldner gave the order to advance. The skirmishers approached a ravine which separated the Russian position from that of the Turks and opened fire. The Turkish sharpshooters, established in some thickets on the other side of the ravine, responded with a violent fusillade. But the Vologda regiment and several companies of the Archangel regiment on the extreme right descended rapidly, climbed the opposite slopes with a shout, and at six o'clock had driven back the Turks and were pursuing them. The other companies of the Archangel regiment remained behind on the left, held in check by the Turks in front of them, who received numerous reinforcements. In consequence, the Vologda regiment and the companies from the right of the Archangel regiment got very much in advance. In fact, led on by the ardour of the pursuit, and also, as was soon found, by the cunning of the enemy, who constantly gave way before them, a part of these troops advanced unsuspectingly right into the town by the main street, which was a continuation of the Nikopol road. Here, elated with their victory, they began to take things in the most leisurely way. Many quitted the fighting column, laid aside their cloaks and knapsacks in the streets, and believing the enemy dispersed, were singing as they straggled along. No patrols had been pushed into the recesses of the town, nor were any cavalry sent forward beyond. The whole proceeding was slovenly to a degree, and the penalty was speedily paid. Suddenly, from a hundred windows and balconies, a terrific fire was poured down by large masses of Turkish infantry, who, hidden in the houses, now first appeared on all sides, and preci-

pitated themselves with shouts of triumph upon the small invading force. In an instant the Russians suffered enormous losses; they fell by hundreds; and having lost Major-general Knorring, commander of the brigade, wounded, and Colonel Rosenbaum, commander of the Archangel regiment, who was killed at the head of his men, they began slowly to retreat—still facing an enemy vastly their superior in numbers. Many of the wounded were unfortunately obliged to be abandoned, and their comrades saw them massacred and mutilated under their very eyes in a most inhuman manner. More than a thousand men perished in this bloody surprise. Major-general Pokhitonow, commander of the 5th Brigade of artillery, rallied the remnants of the regiments, and led them back outside the town, where they remained until the order to retreat was given at 11.30.

The 19th (Kostroma) regiment had also been exceedingly roughly treated, and was at the same time in great need of succour. Colonel Kleinhaus having received orders at three o'clock in the morning to attack the Turkish positions situated to the east of the town, immediately prepared to execute them. At five o'clock the regiment approached the positions, and was at once cannonaded from the batteries which had been erected on a height behind Grivica, a village which is built in a hollow on the banks of a rivulet. The Russian commander then placed his battery in position, and formed his two first battalions into columns of companies, at the same time placing the two sotnias of Kouban Cossacks to cover his right flank. After a short cannonade, during which one of the Turkish guns was dismounted by the Russian fire, the Russians commenced the assault, and successfully carried two lines of intrenchments.

The Turks, on retiring, massed themselves in a third line of trenches, and opened a terrible fire on the Russian columns as they came forward. At each step the ranks thinned under a shower of shell and ball, and three of the principal officers were wounded one after the other. Colonel Kleinhaus, commander of the regiment, having arrived on the right flank to lead a fresh charge in person, fell, struck by a shot. A few minutes after, whilst his wound was being dressed, he was killed by a wound in the head from the bursting of a shell. At this moment Sub-lieutenant Schatilow, uniting those that remained of the advanced companies,

dashed forward and carried the third line of intrenchments, the Bashi-bazouks who were defending it mounting their horses and taking to flight.

The 7th and 8th companies, which formed the left flank, advanced, preceded by the 2nd and 3rd companies deployed as skirmishers; and rushing forward with loud hurrahs, drove the Turks from their trenches. The companies on the right, commanded by Major Grintsevitch, having had to dislodge the Turks from two successive lines of intrenchments, reached the same height as their comrades on the left a little later. By its well-directed fire upon the Turkish flank, the 5th battery of the 31st Artillery Brigade contributed largely to the capture of the intrenchments.

Majors Baraschew (who took the command of the regiment) and Ksirikha were now the only two superior officers who were not killed or wounded. They reformed the companies, and led them forward upon the whole line of attack. The Turks then, abandoning all their intrenchments, fled back to the town and established themselves in the gardens and the outlying houses, from which they continued to direct upon the Russians a galling fusillade, whilst their batteries redoubled their front and flank fires on the line of intrenchments occupied by the Kostroma regiment. The 5th battery of the 31st Brigade of artillery advanced as far as the line of fire of the Turkish infantry, and shelled the enemy in the town, and at the same time fired upon the Turkish batteries.

It soon became evident, however, that there was no possibility of retaining the positions which had been occupied. The regiment had suffered enormously, especially in officers; no reserve remained; the cartridges and artillery ammunition were well-nigh exhausted, and it was impossible to obtain any more, the magazines being stationed at Bulgareni. On the other hand, the Turks were becoming more and more numerous. A thick screen of sharpshooters had been thrown out from Plevna, followed by heavy masses of troops; and seeing his regiment seriously menaced in flank and rear, about nine o'clock Major Baraschew ordered a retreat, during which the Turks pursued the Russians up to the first line of intrenchments which they had previously abandoned. They there stopped and directed an artillery fire upon the retreating regiment.

The Caucasus Brigade of Cossacks (with the exception of the two sotnias who were on the

right flank of the Kostroma regiment, and took no part in the action) was stationed, at the beginning of the fight, at Radisovo, on the extreme left. The nature of the ground preventing a cavalry charge, Colonel Toutolmine tried to bring his battery of mountain guns to bear upon the Turkish flank, but found they carried scarcely half the distance. Then he moved to the right, and on reaching the spot between Radisovo and Grivica, where he found the Kostroma regiment in retreat, he placed his brigade on their left flank and retreated with them first to Sgalevitse, and afterwards to Bulgareni.

Up to 9.30 a.m. General Schilder-Schuldner was not aware of what was passing on the left; he only heard the cannonade. At that time he received a report informing him that the colonel of the Kostroma regiment was killed, and that their advance had been stopped. Foreseeing that the left would be obliged to make a retrograde movement, and not having any reserves, General Schilder-Schuldner sent Colonel Popow, chief staff officer of the division, to ascertain the situation on the right flank. Having discovered that the troops were enfeebled, and had suffered tremendous losses, especially in officers, of whom two-thirds were *hors de combat*, and seeing that the Turks were commencing to bring forward their right in great strength—thus threatening the line of retreat—General Schilder-Schuldner ordered the retreat at half-past eleven in the morning, directing it to be covered by the 9th regiment of Don Cossacks, who immediately mounted their horses, and, falling back upon the neighbouring ravine, deployed to the left, and then retired in echelon by sotnias. The Turkish cavalry only made some feeble attacks, which were easily repulsed.

If the Russians had been opposed to an enemy better provided with cavalry, and more enterprising, their situation would have been extremely critical, as they had no reserves, and not one fresh man in their army. Moreover, the garrison of Nikopol had been reduced to a mere handful by General Krudener having despatched such numbers from his 9th Corps to Schilder-Schuldner, and there were very few troops except this now hopelessly beaten force between the victorious Turks and the Sistova bridge. Happily, however, for the Russians, Osman Pasha did not think fit to profit by this victory, or to interfere with a retreat which it would have been so easy to turn into something worse than a

route. Luckily, too, the 20th Galitz regiment, which came from Nikopol, arrived just in time to place itself in the rear guard and protect the retreat of its brigade.

By six o'clock in the evening all the troops were out of the reach of the Turks. The 1st Brigade of the 5th Division, with the Galitz regiment and the 9th of the Don Cossacks, established themselves for the night at Bryslan. The Kostroma regiment and the brigade of Caucasus Cossacks had reached Bulgareni. During the retreat the 1st Brigade abandoned on the field of battle seventeen waggons of cartridges, of which some had been smashed by the shells, and the rest could not be taken away on account of the teams of horses having been killed. The Kostroma regiment had, before the combat, put down their knapsacks, which, as they did not pass the same place on their retreat, were left upon the field of battle.

The Russian official reports acknowledged the blunders made, but stated that the Turks had at their disposal at least forty battalions and very powerful artillery, including fifteen Krupp guns of position. The loss of the Russians, from their being thus overwhelmed by an enemy so greatly superior in numbers, was admitted to be out of all proportion. They had about 7500 men engaged, and their loss amounted to seventy-four officers and 2771 men. Such figures, while they convict those in command of carelessness, show on the part of the troops bravery worthy of a better fate; for few soldiers in the world are capable of remaining unshaken in the midst of so frightful a butchery.

The entire management of this first battle of Plevna exhibited a lack of good generalship simply disgraceful to the Russian commanders. Elated and rendered careless by the apparent success of one or two brilliant operations, it seemed to be thought that every other movement could be carried out with equal temerity; and the march upon Plevna was arranged more like a promenade than a military movement from which any serious consequences might be expected. Of course, it may be said that the Russians did not know they had before them a large Turkish army; but they ought to have been aware of this, if they claimed to know even those rudiments of the science of war which are supposed to be taught in every civilized army. A few

score of Cossacks keeping a sharp look out would have perceived the movement from Widin; and had the road thence to Plevna been at once occupied, the Turks would have had to attack instead of the Russians. Even granting that Osman Pasha could not have been kept out of Plevna, and that an attack upon that place was necessary, the simple precaution of a fairly executed reconnaissance would have saved many hundreds of lives and untold suffering. In fact, but for the blundering of the Russians—first, in not occupying Plevna on their advance to Tirnova, and then in fighting this battle there under circumstances which rendered defeat absolutely certain—it is doubtful whether the succeeding operations, with all their fearful carnage, might not have been to a great extent avoided.

The defeat on the 20th July made clear to all how perilous was the position of the Russian army. Osman Pasha was able either to proceed straight towards Sistova, or to descend the Vid and recapture Nikopol, and threaten in every possible way the communications of the Grand-duke Nicholas. To oppose these movements, General Krudener had remaining only one whole brigade and another half destroyed.

The result of this danger to the Russians was important, as much from a political as a military point of view. Up to that time, in order to respect the susceptibilities of Austria, and also as a point of honour, to do without the co-operation of what was supposed to be so feeble an ally, the Russians had opposed every kind of obstacle to the entry into the campaign of the Roumanian army; after this first attack upon Plevna, however, they were only too happy to consent that they should cross into Bulgaria. General Krudener had resolved to march with all the troops at his disposal to Bulgareni, in order to save the brigade under Schilder-Schuldner and to cover the Sistova road; but in order to do this it was necessary to use the garrison of Nikopol, and it was then first suggested that the Russian garrison should be replaced by the 4th Roumanian Division, which was at Islacz awaiting the call of the Grand-duke Nicholas.

As the Roumanian officers were ardently desirous of taking part in the war, General Manu, commander of the Division, had a long time before made all his arrangements. They had a steamer at anchor capable of holding 200 men. Then

the General got ready some barges which had been used during the crossing at Sistova, and some boats. At three o'clock in the morning of July 26, the 5th regiment of infantry, camped at Islacz, was aroused and assembled under arms, and the embarkment commenced. The officers were almost beside themselves with joy, and brandished their swords. The soldiers, on the other hand, were much calmer. The military band was stationed on the bank playing polkas and quadrilles until all the regiment had passed, and finally it also was embarked. General Manu and his staff officer placed themselves on the small steamer which regulated the progress of the boats.

On placing his foot on Bulgarian soil the commander of the regiment, Colonel Satrovan, burst forth into a ringing cheer, which was taken up by the officers and men. On the bank a Russian detachment of about two companies was assembled under arms. They were all that remained of the Russian garrison, the rest being already on their way to Plevna. The soldiers of the two nations rendered each other the customary honours; on both sides the colours were lowered; General Manu and the Russian colonel in command of the place shook hands cordially. Then the Russian standard, which was waving on a flagstaff at the edge of the river, was taken down, and in its place was hoisted the Roumanian tricolor. The small Russian detachment which had been left then set out for Plevna.

The battle of the 20th July had another result—one of a more purely strategical character. The town of Lovatz is situated on the upper course of the Osma, in the valley of that river, about twenty-two miles from Plevna, twenty-two also from Selvi, and nineteen from Trojan. The town is divided into two parts: the Mussulman portion (Moustapha), which contains 1200 houses, and is built on the heights on the left bank, and the Bulgarian town (Dolni Kraï), which has 800 houses, and is spread out in the valley on the right bank. A badly constructed bridge, over which the road from Selvi to Plevna and Nikopol passes, connects the two. Lovatz has a population of 12,000, the majority being Mussulmans. It possesses three orthodox churches and twenty mosques. It is one of the rich commercial towns of Danubian Bulgaria, and sends large quantities of leather to Austria and France.

It was considered that the possession of this

town would materially strengthen the Russian left. Accordingly, on the 17th July, General Soubatof, commander of the Russian troops at Selvi, sent a reconnaissance against Lovatz, composed of the 2nd squadron of Cossacks of the Guard, two sotnias of the 30th regiment of Don Cossacks, one sotnia of the 23rd, two pieces of Cossack artillery, and a detachment of the Vladikavhav regiment. This column encountered, when a few miles beyond Selvi, a body of Circassians, Bashi-bazouks, and infantry, amounting in all to about 1500 men. The engagement which ensued was very sharp, the Turks were routed, and the Cossacks, after a gallant contest, carried Lovatz lance in hand. Most of the Mussulman inhabitants of the town took to flight, and the Christians, to the number of about 3000, went and joined the Russians and gave them a hearty welcome.

After the defeat at Plevna General Soubatof considered the garrison of Lovatz to be in too exposed a position, and gave orders that they should fall back at the first demonstration on the part of the Turks. The latter arrived on Friday, the 27th July. At six o'clock on the morning of that day large masses of Turkish troops were perceived on the heights above the town; and bearing in mind the orders of General Soubatof, and seeing, moreover, the utter futility of resistance, the small Russian detachment hastily retired. The absence of resistance, it was hoped, would screen the Christian population from any reprisals, but in this the Russians were unfortunately mistaken. The infidel invader had been welcomed with open arms, and for this the Turks apparently determined to exact a fearful and bloody revenge. A savage thirst for blood joined to a really infernal refinement of cruelty provided a frightful spectacle, the details of which seem to have surpassed all that had been committed in Bulgaria for the two previous years. Encouraged by the retreat of the handful of Russians, the Turks rushed upon the town just when the terrified Bulgarians were attempting to escape on different sides, and a very small number succeeded in getting away without injury, for the town was already almost entirely surrounded. A terrible carnage immediately commenced, the gun being only used when the yataghan was not sufficient, and to reach fugitives at a distance.

When the outskirts of the town were covered with blood and dead bodies, and the rest of

the population had fled into the houses, the butchery commenced in the town itself, and some of the narrow streets were literally blocked with corpses. A large number were also killed in and around the church. Little did the simple Bulgarians dream of so murderous a retaliation when welcoming their supposed deliverers a few days previously; and while the conduct of the Turks cannot but meet with general execration, it seems, on the other hand, difficult to justify the Russians in exposing any considerable town to such outrages by occupying it at a time when they could have been by no means certain of holding it. The Turks having regained possession, strengthened their position by extemporizing some fortifications around the town, and by so increasing the number of their forces there that, as we shall see in a future chapter, its second occupation by the Russians proved a far more costly operation than the first. Leaving Lovatz, however, for the present, we resume our narrative of the events transpiring around Plevna, in which so large a portion of the interest of the war was now to be centred.

When the news of the bloody surprise at Plevna reached the head-quarters of the Grand-duke Nicholas at Tirnova—where great enthusiasm prevailed just at the time, on account of the passage of the Balkans and the successes of General Gourko—the Grand-duke understood immediately the gravity of the reverses which the 9th Corps had just sustained. If the Turks, animated by their victory, returned to Nikopol, or advanced directly to Sistova, would not the Russian army run the risk of being cut off from its base of operations on the Danube? If the Turkish troops of the Quadrilateral, leaving the army of the Czarewitch before Rustchuk, advanced towards the west, while Osman Pasha came to meet them from the east, would not the Russian army be in danger of being taken between the Vid and the Jantra, like the French army at Sedan?

The Grand-duke resolved that at any rate nothing should be neglected to defend the situation which, as a matter of fact, his errors had created. He regarded it as important, in the first place, to disentangle himself at all costs from the army whose existence was just revealed in so vigorous a manner. By taking possession of Plevna, the Russians would free their right wing, now so menaced, and secure for a long time their lines of communication as well as their

bridges on the Danube. Masters of this town, they would be almost sure to be able to hold in check Osman Pasha's army, beaten and driven back on the west, and would then be free to concentrate all their strength on the army of the Quadrilateral. At the same time they could reinforce the troops engaged in the Tunja Valley beyond the Balkans, so as to enable them to pursue without too much danger their contemplated advance on Adrianople, having only the forces who were opposed to their front to overcome, and no cause to fear for their lines of operation. Besides, it was obvious that the fall of Plevna necessarily involved that of Lovatz, where the Turks would not be able to remain, surrounded on all sides by superior numbers. Such apparently was the scheme which presented itself to the mind of the Russian Commander-in-chief, and preparations were at once made for carrying it out. Prince Schachowskoi, who was proceeding with the 11th Corps against Osman Bazar, received orders to leave a part of his troops at that point, and to advance with forced marches with the 1st Brigade of the 32nd Infantry Division and the 1st Brigade of the 11th Division of Cavalry to the assistance of General Krudener. The 30th Division, of the 4th Corps, was on its way to cross the Danube by the bridges at Sistova. An order was sent to it to march on Plevna instead of rejoining the headquarters at Tirnova; and the 9th Corps was ordered to extend in expectation of the reinforcements which were to reach it from both sides. This last order was easy of execution, for the Turks manifested no intention whatever of taking the offensive.

If, however, the victorious Turkish General did not think fit to follow up his advantage by any lengthened pursuit or by a general movement upon the Russian positions, he by no means wasted the breathing-time furnished by the defeat of his enemy. Osman Pasha had a keen perception of the natural strategic advantages of his position at Plevna, and he at once commenced to improve these by artificial works, the conception and execution of which showed a genius for military engineering of which Todleben himself might have been proud, and the defensive strength of which proved fully a match for the skill of the defender of Sebastopol.

The positions occupied by Osman Pasha round Plevna lay upon heights which surround and com-

mand the town on three sides—on the north, east, and south. To the westward only, towards the Vid, is the ground level and open. From this latter river a range of heights stretches away to the eastward, on the north of the town, to the village of Grivica. Of these hills the highest points are near the villages of Opanet, Bukova, and Grivica. On the east of Plevna again, between the Grivica and Tuchenitsa streams, are two long spurs of high ground, falling with steep slopes towards the water-courses on the north and south, and towards Plevna itself on the west. On the south of the town, finally, a range of hills runs from the Tuchenitsa to the Vid, offering a remarkably strong defensive position, as the ground at the base of their southern slopes is swampy, and these latter themselves are steep, and cut up by rocky and precipitous ravines. Before the 18th of July, the day on which the advanced guard of Osman Pasha's army entered Plevna, the town was entirely without any artificial defences; but following their traditional tactics, the Turks, as soon as they took possession of it, began at once to use the spade. The first place thus fortified was the convent of St. Nestor, a building with massive stone walls, situated about half-way between Plevna and Grivica, and in which the head-quarters of Osman Pasha were, in the first instance, established. Three days afterwards—immediately, that is to say, after the repulse of the first Russian attack on the 20th of July—Major Risa Bey, of the general staff, was directed by Osman Pasha to prepare a scheme for fortifying the whole of the heights round the town, and especially the Grivica hill, upon which the Russian batteries had come into action during the attack alluded to. By the 30th of July many of the works thus designed were completed, and among them notably the celebrated Grivica redoubt. This work, situated to the north of the high road from Plevna to Grivica, had a very strong profile, and was arranged both for musketry and artillery defence. The parapet was ten feet high, and the ditch ten feet deep; while a number of shelter trenches were traced, both in front of the principal work and on its flanks, to give a second tier of musketry fire. The second Grivica redoubt was situated almost due west of the first. Its garrison consisted of 1000 men and six guns, and its profile was as formidable as that of the first redoubt. The third Turkish intrenchment, which was quite as large and as strong a work as either of

the other two, bore the name of Bukova Tabia, or Fort Bukova, and was placed to the westward of the road from Plevna to Nikopol, immediately to the westward of the small village of Bukova. These three works formed the main defences on the range of heights to the northward of Plevna; but the intervals between the second and third, and between this latter again and the river Vid, were occupied by shelter trenches of strong profile and batteries for heavy field-guns, the whole traced so as to give a powerful cross-fire over most of the ground within range; while an especially formidable battery was constructed in rear of the opening between the first and second work, for the defence of the road leading from the village of Grivica into Plevna. On the east of the town the main defensive work was situated on the eastern extremity of the high ground between the Grivica and Tuchenitsa streams, and immediately to the north of the village of Radisovo. This work was also a large redoubt, with arrangements for both artillery and musketry fire, and having a parapet ten feet high and a ditch ten feet deep. It was also, like the works on the north of the town, surrounded by shelter trenches. To the westward of it was a somewhat smaller redoubt on the spur which from Radisovo declined towards Plevna. Immediately above the town itself, between the two streams already frequently mentioned, was placed a large portion of the Turkish camp, also protected by several open works and lines of shelter trench; the whole forming a second barrier against any advance which might be undertaken upon Plevna over the ground between the two brooks. On the south of the town the defences consisted of three large open works, to the west of the road entering Plevna from Lovatz, and occupying the heights extending from the Tuchenitsa brook to the river Vid; while in rear of these Adil Pasha's division occupied a strongly intrenched camp. These troops, which formed the reserve of Osman Pasha's army, were consequently stationed in a central position, whence they could be carried with equal readiness to reinforce either the right or left wing. Especial care was bestowed by Osman Pasha upon the strengthening of this, the southern section of his circle of defensive works—probably because the outer intrenchments covered the second road leading from Plevna to the left bank of the Vid, along which, until the communication was cut, the convoys coming from Sophia or Orhanie

entered the town. Finally, on the west side of the Vid four strong open works, connected and supported by batteries and shelter trenches, completed the girdle of defences round Plevna, and covered a stone bridge by which the highway leading to Sophia crossed the river.

Briefly then, Plevna became, in an incredibly short time, a formidable intrenched camp, with strong earthwork fortifications which extended in an immense half circle from Plizitza, north of Plevna, on the Vid, to Grivica, where stood the great easterly dominating redoubt, to Radisovo and thence to Blazivas, the southern horn of the half-circle also resting on the Vid. The works were so arranged as to command each other, while at every available locality were established ditches for sharpshooters. Generally speaking, the works on the north commanded those of the south; but all were dominated by a redoubt constructed on the north of the road and north-west of the village of Grivica, forming the key of the position. A better idea can be formed of the Turkish defensive works by a reference to our plan of the battle of Plevna of the 30th July.

Osman Pasha, the general whose genius originated these almost invincible defences of Plevna, and who may fairly be said to have been more distinguished for ability and efficiency than any Turkish commander during the war, was, unlike some of the leaders of the Ottoman army, a Turk born and bred. He was born at Amassia, in Asia Minor, in 1832, and up to the period of the war had never been in any country of Europe except European Turkey. He commenced his education at a preparatory school in Constantinople, under the supervision of his brother, Hussein Effendi, who at the time was professor of Arabic at the institution. From the preparatory school Osman passed in due course into the military school, and quitting this latter, in 1853, with very high certificates, at once entered the army as a lieutenant, being appointed to the general staff in Shumla shortly after the outbreak of the Crimean War. His gallantry in action and general soldierlike qualities led to his rapid advancement, and at the termination of the campaign he was appointed a captain in the Imperial Guard in Constantinople. Before long he was appointed to the rank of battalion chief, and as such took part in the fighting in Crete from 1866 to 1869. Returning to Constantinople after the suppression of the insurrection in the

island, he was promoted to colonel, and on attaining the rank of brigadier-general was appointed to the command of a division in the 5th Army Corps. In the Turco-Servian War Osman Pasha commanded the division of the Turkish army assembled at Widdin, and for his conduct in the campaign was promoted by an Imperial irade to the rank of Mushir, or field-marshal. When the present war broke out he still remained at Widdin, but his command was increased to sixty-eight battalions, sixteen squadrons, and 174 guns; and it was with the greater part of this force that he appeared at Plevna in July, turned the tide of war in favour of the Turks, and for a time raised hopes at Constantinople that the infidel invader would yet be driven back across the Danube.

Personally, Osman Pasha is tall, of spare figure, and somewhat delicate in health. He was active and intelligent, and scrupulously attentive to his duties; inquiring personally into the details of his army and its tactics, and directing the mode in which they were to be executed. These qualities, combined with his urbane and agreeable manners, and the absence of the luxurious tastes which characterized many of the Ottoman Pashas, won the confidence and ardent attachment of the really fine Turkish army which so long held the Russians at bay around Plevna. Indeed, it was the self-denying, patient, and resolute demeanour of Osman himself which largely inspired that splendid resistance to an enemy rashly confident of an assumed superiority. In the Turkish camp all men were alike, from Marshal to bugler. Were the men short of tobacco? Osman did not smoke. Could the men get no meat? He would have none. "Let us do as the men are forced to do," he remarked when one of the officers suggested that they should have some better pilaf—a dish which the Marshal's cook probably did not understand how to make. "The soldiers," continued his Excellency, "have to eat their rice without any meat, and we must do the same. If they can bear it, I am sure we can." The soldiers learnt to recognise all this, and they loved the man who was willing to forego all comfort and ease, and, if necessary, to die at any moment with them. And when, at all hours of the night—as was his wont—Osman Pasha passing from redoubt to intrenchment, and from thence to the magazines, attended only by one of his staff and an orderly, went among his men, they cheered

him in an undertone, and thanked him for coming to see them. Rarely was ever a general so beloved by all under his command. Rigidly just, severe as a disciplinarian, stern to repress anything like disobedience or hesitation, he was yet like a father amongst his children, speaking a kindly word to the wounded, encouraging the weary, and praising the worthy; so that as he moved about the camp his glance fell like sunshine upon the men, and they felt that, even in doing their hard duty, they had a certain pleasure and reward. His spirit, moreover, distilled itself through all the Pashas and chief officers to the men; and the result was mutual forbearance and sympathy gave the camp much of the character of a happy family, to say nothing of the stronger unity which sprang from the presence of the common danger. Of the other and less commendable features of Osman's character, in relation to his treatment of the British medical men who offered their services to his sick and wounded, we shall have occasion to speak further on. We have now to revert to the renewed assault upon the position of Osman Pasha resolved upon by the Russians after their failure of the 20th July.

Immediately after that event took place, General Krudener marched the remainder of his *corps d'armée* from Nikopol to Breslianitsa; while the former town was, as has been already stated, occupied by the Roumanian troops under General Manu. At the same time the Commander-in-chief sent, as reinforcements to General Krudener, the 1st Brigade of the 32nd Infantry Division and the 1st Brigade of the 11th Cavalry Division, under the direct orders of Lieutenant-general Prince Schachowskoi, commander of the 11th Army Corps; and the 30th Infantry Division (4th Corps), which had just crossed the Danube.

General Schachowskoi set out on the 22nd from Osman Bazar, and on the 27th, after a rapid and well-executed march, arrived at Karajac Bugarski, about fifteen miles to the east of Plevna. Here he met with some indications of bad omen as to the strength of the Turkish troops assembled before him. Reinforced since the 20th by troops from Widdin and Sophia, Osman Pasha, said these reports, had at least 60,000 men at his disposal (though after his surrender it became known that he never had more than 45,000); and we have already seen with what care he had fortified his position. If we reflect that all the forces of

Krudener and Schachowskoi together formed a total of less than 30,000 men, with 186 cannon, and including three brigades of cavalry, a very strong amount of presumption would seem necessary to fight under such unfavourable circumstances. Besides which, the commander of the 11th Corps learned that Lovatz was also very strongly occupied by the Turks; and it was feared that a Turkish corps making a sortie from this place would fall on the rear of the Russian army while it attacked Plevna, or that, advancing from the east, it would cut the communications between General Schachowskoi's quarters and the headquarters at Tirnova.

Whatever the difficulties, however, the orders from the Grand-duke to General Krudener, of which Schachowskoi was the bearer, were precise and unmistakable, and they directed the attack to be made on Plevna at the earliest possible moment. Krudener, more alive than the Commander-in-chief to the formidable nature of the task, told Schachowskoi that he would not make the attack unless he received direct orders from the Grand-duke Nicholas; and telegraphed to the Commander-in-chief that he had but 26,000 men, while there were at least 50,000 Turks around Plevna. It is to be observed, moreover, that this was the second time that General Krudener had brought under the notice of the Grand-duke the fact that the Moslem forces greatly outnumbered his own. According to General Krudener's statement the reply now came back that "there were only 27,000 Turks in that position, and he was to attack at once." Such imperative orders were, of course, not to be disregarded. The two generals at once exchanged views as to the nature of the difficulties which they would have to overcome by a united operation, and the 28th and 29th were employed in preparations for action.

The first care of the commander of the 11th Corps was to guard against an attack from the Lovatz side during the operations upon Plevna. For this purpose General Michael Skobelev was ordered to make a strong reconnaissance upon Lovatz, and, if possible, to occupy the town. He was informed, at the same time, that no movement of troops had been observed between Lovatz and Plevna. Young Michael Skobelev was the stormy petrel of the Russian army. Being attached to the suite of the Czar, he belonged to no command in particular; but, with a kind of roving license,

he wandered from one fighting ground to another, only coveting to be in the thick of every desperate or difficult enterprise. He was in the crossing at Simnitsa, was in fact amongst the first to cross, and was one of those who charged the Turks on the opposite side with rifle and bayonet. He was in the fighting at the Shipka, and led the first column which traversed that Pass; and when there seemed some prospect of quietude on the other side of the Balkans, he joined the 11th Corps on its expedition to Plevna. He now gladly accepted charge of the dangerous, and therefore congenial, task of reconnoitring, and if possible dislodging, the Turkish forces in position at Lovatz. He speedily found, however, that the information respecting this place was erroneous. There must have been a strong movement of Turks upon it, as they were there in such large numbers that the taking of the place with his brigade of Cossacks was found to be impossible. Skobelev had never distinguished himself for prudence, and always advised vigorous action, even at great risk; and it is significant that even he, upon his return from Lovatz, after witnessing the masses of Turks near Plevna, should have expressed himself opposed to the folly and rashness of attacking, with about 30,000 men, an enemy of between 40,000 and 50,000, and these sheltered by fortifications. Although not fully succeeding in his mission, General Skobelev brought some valuable information back, and in the subsequent operations he was designated to protect the Russian left from any surprise on the Lovatz side.

In the afternoon of the 29th Generals Krudener and Schachowskoi held a council of war, in which the generals of division and of brigade took part. The plan of the attack to be made next day was discussed. By right of seniority the command belonged to Baron Krudener; but, besides his authority being lessened by the unfortunate check his troops had sustained on the 20th, General Schachowskoi had the advantage, already mentioned, of being the bearer of instructions from the Grand-duke and from the head-quarters at Tirnova. Some amount of uncertainty was the inevitable result of this duality of command. General Krudener and General Schachowskoi passed, moreover, in the Russian army, as possessing very different dispositions; General Krudener had the reputation of being a good officer, but slow, slightly inactive, and a little negligent;

General Schachowskoi, on the contrary, was full of spirit, but rash and adventurous. The battle of the 30th was about to bring out this contrast in a striking manner. Then the fact that Baron Krudener was a German from the Baltic provinces, while Prince Schachowskoi was a pure Slave, did not tend to promote cordiality. There existed between these two races, which divided between them all the offices and honours of Russia, inveterate jealousy; and there were not wanting those who thought that the former did not do all in his power to aid the latter in retaining the advantages he gained, because he would have been sorry to see the merit of the victory attributed to him. As any proof of this fact, however, would certainly have been followed by the trial of the chief of the 9th Corps, there could have been no ground for the assertion, since Baron Krudener retained his command. The more probable conclusion concerning the battle which followed this council of war is, that the generalship of Schachowskoi exhibited a daring rashness and presumption which could only be excused by the still greater rashness and presumption of the Grand-duke's orders on the occasion, that "Plevna must be taken, whatever the cost." On the 29th the troops were disposed as follows:—

The 9th Bug regiment of Lancers and the 9th Don Cossacks, with the Don Cossack battery (10 squadrons and 6 guns), were at Breslianitsa.

The 31st Infantry Division, less the 124th Voronege infantry and the 5th battery (9 battalions and 40 guns), were at Koïoulovtsy.

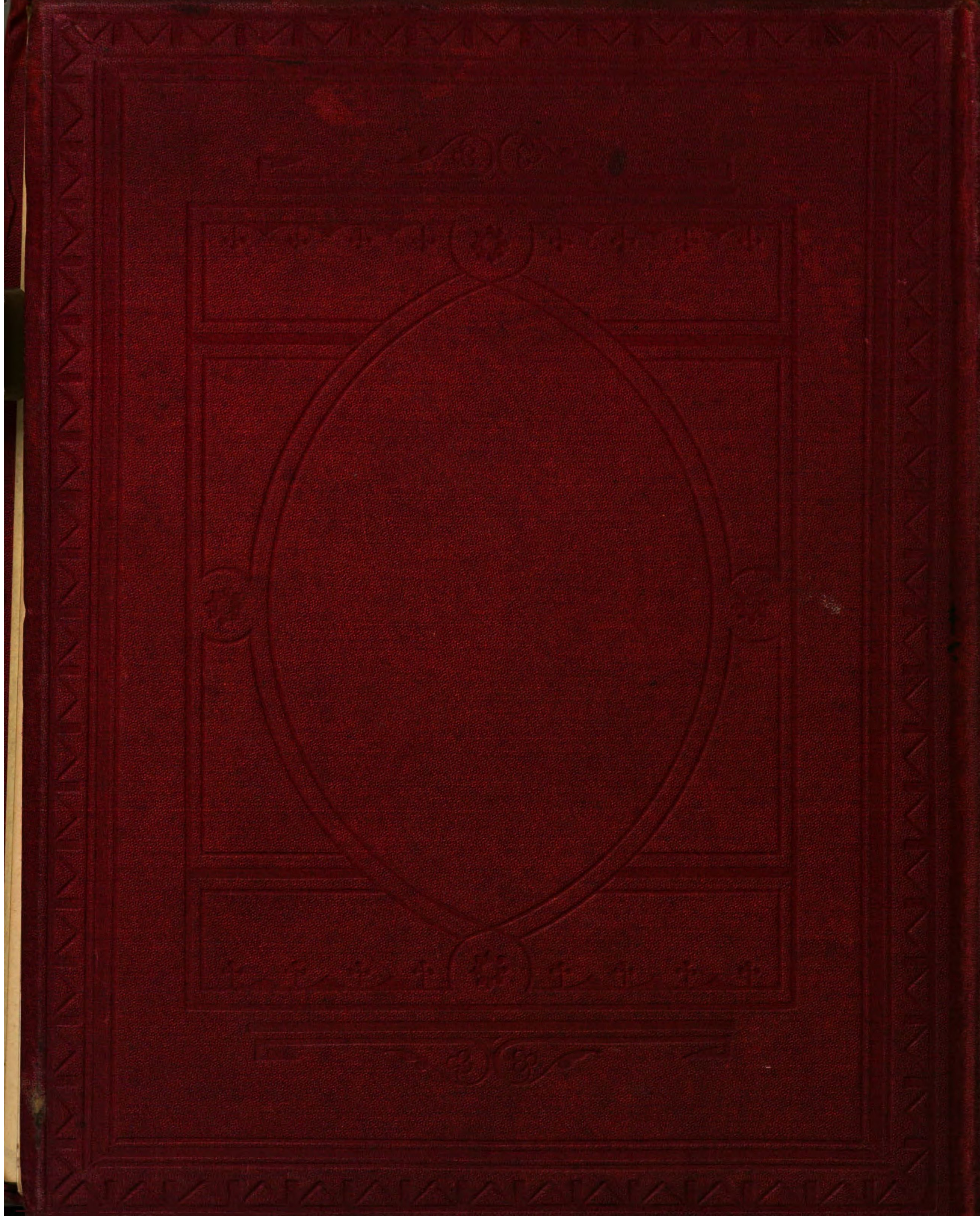
The 5th Infantry Division, less the 19th Kostroma regiment and the 3rd battery (9 battalions and 40 guns), at Tourski-Trestenik.

The 2nd Brigade of the 30th Division of infantry, with the 2nd, 4th, and 6th batteries (6 battalions and 24 guns), at Karajac Bugarsky.

The 1st Brigade of the 30th Division, with the 1st, 3rd, and 5th batteries (6 battalions and 24 guns); the 1st Brigade of the 32nd Division, with the 1st, 3rd, and 4th batteries (6 battalions and 24 guns); the first Brigade of the 11th Cavalry Division, with the 18th battery of horse artillery (8 squadrons and 6 guns), at Poradim.

The Caucasus Brigade, with the 8th Don Cossack battery, and a horse battery of mountain guns (12 squadrons and 12 guns), at Bogot.

The total strength of these troops was 36 battalions and 30 squadrons, with 186 guns.



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